



IN my last "Record" I gave a little advice to those who, having laid aside their cameras during the winter, were about to commence the work of the season. In this I have a few words for those about to put their hands to the photographic plow for the first time.

They naturally seek advice, and it is a matter of considerable importance as to whom they shall apply: to the friend who bought a "kodak" a year ago, who snaps at everything that looks pretty, knows all about it, and is thoroughly satisfied with himself; or to one who may not be so easily approached, but who has gone through all the phases of the art, knows the possibilities and limitations of every branch and every variety of camera and lens, and who, while realizing that he has yet much to learn, is able from long, and often sad experience to teach the beginner just what he ought to know.

The first question is, of course, as to the camera, shall it be a stand or a hand? There should be no uncertain sound about the answer. The hand camera has great possibilities, but it has greater limitations, and he who begins with it will hardly ever make more of it than a toy; and sooner or later, and more likely soon than late it will meet the toy's fate, neglect. That most catchy of catch advertisements, "You press the button, we do the rest," has sold thousands of hand cameras, and led to the consumption of thousands of dollars' worth of material; but if we could see the results of the doing of "the rest" we should have probably the most striking example of misplaced confidence that the world has ever afforded, and if the statistics were available I venture to say that at least ninety-five per cent. of all who were so misled gave up photography in disgust. A roper knowledge of the possibilities and the imitations of the hand camera can be come at only through a thoroughly practical experience with the stand camera, an experience which includes the study of composition and lighting on the focusing

screen, and the ability to get the maximum result from the minimum of exposure; as only he who possesses those qualifications fully realizes the fact that the hand camera, both in its actual use and in the after manipulations, is the most difficult tool that the photographer employs.

A stand camera having been decided on, the next question is as to size and quality. For various reasons I am inclined to recommend a 5x4, and of very good quality; that is of good workmanship, although not necessarily of the high class of finish, but with rising front and swing back, and a pretty long draw—not less than eight inches, and ten or even twelve would be better. Such length is, not necessary for ordinary work, but there are purposes for which it is a great advantage. 6¹/₂x8⁷/₂ is the ideal size for an amateur who aims at pictorial or decorative photography; but the beginner would find its manipulation difficult, and his failures would make it expensive. 4x5 is small enough to be both easy and economical, and large enough to be useful for many purposes, so that he would not need to dispose of it at a sacrifice or lay it aside as useless, when the time came, as come it surely would, for him to adopt the larger size.

Of even more importance is the lens. It should be a doublet of the rectilinear type, or if the beginner can easily afford it, one of the recently introduced anastigmatic family, and in either case, by one of the well-known makers, and of not less than six inches equivalent focus but better still if of seven or eight inches.

The only other thing of importance is the tripod, which for convenience should be of the folding or sliding variety, but with only one fold or slide, and heavy enough and well enough made to be perfectly rigid when erect.

Naturally, one of the first questions asked is as to the cost; and not less naturally the expression of surprise from those whose idea of the value of photographic apparatus has been formed from seeing advertisements of complete outfits, including everything necessary for the production of pictures, for from ten to twenty dollars. From a pretty accurate knowledge of the apparatus made or imported and used in this country, I say with confidence that nothing much cheaper than the following would be satisfactory, and that nothing more expensive is really necessary. Camera with three double plate holders from \$20 to \$30. Lens from \$20 to \$50, the cheaper being perfectly satisfactory. Tripod from \$3 to \$4. DR. JOHN NICOL.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. H. Y.—Any gentleman of good standing in the community, not under eighteen years of age, residing within the limits of Kings, Richmond and New York Counties, is eligible for resident membership in the Crescent Athletic Club of Brooklyn At the present time the initiation fee is \$25, and the annual dues are \$40. Membership in the Knickerbocker Athletic Club is of four classes, viz, 1. Resident members, whose place of residence or of occupation is within thirty miles of New York City. 2. Non-resident members, who neither reside nor carry on their daily occupation within thirty miles of New York City.

3. Active athletic members, who in the opinion of the Athletic Committee are either regular members or promising candidates of any of the Club athletic teams under the rules of eligibility of the Amateur Athletic Union. 4. Junior members, who are between the ages of fifteen and eighteen years. These shall have the use of the gymnasium and baths only, for such hours as the Athletic Committee shall decide. Admission fee for resident members fifty dollars, and annual dues thirty-six dollars; for non-resident members, twenty-five dollars admission fee, and annual dues twelve dollars.