

PHOTOGRAPHY AS APPLIED BY SPORTSMEN.

W. E. Carlin.

THE photographic illustration of field sports has never taken the position it is entitled to. That the fault does not lie at the door of photography is evident from the many fine examples of such work shown at recent exhibitions.

Photography may or may not be a mechanical process, just as one chooses to take it. I do not call it art, but a thoroughly plastic process, which, in the proper hands, will some day be art. The negative, if made with the proper apparatus, gives a correct drawing of the scene, including proper perspective; but it is beyond the power of any plate to render even approximately correct tonal values, while the lens, unfortunately, has not the selective faculty, and will, on the original negative, show many disturbing details which a painter would have avoided. These are the faults which the photographer must correct. With such printing processes as the gum-bichromate or the brush development of platinotype paper the negative becomes merely a guide, which one may follow as far as fancy dictates. All false values may be corrected, details may be subdued or eliminated at pleasure, while in the latter process the drawing may be changed. Not only can details be eliminated, but they may be introduced.

If one is simply after records, and these are often interesting and valuable—all very well! But if one intends to place his work on the same plane as illustrations made with the brush, he must exercise the same care or even greater care than the artist. The composition of the scene must be studied from different points of view, remembering that in simplicity lies strength. The lighting must be watched until it becomes most favorable, and since the lens is not selective the operator must be so. Above all, let there be a good and sufficient reason for having made the photograph at all.

A MOST interesting branch of the sportsmen's photography should be the combination of the jack and the flash lamps. Many of the ponds in the Adirondacks and Maine woods are good grounds to work on. It is an easy matter to run your canoe within the required distance of a deer, but it is not so easy to find a flash lamp of sufficient power to give a really good light for out-of-door work.

The faults of nearly all flashlight work are the excessively harsh high lights, lack of half-

tones, and the black, heavy shadows, devoid of detail. This is due to the light being weak and local in its effect. I am having made two flash lamps, one for use in the boat and the other automatic for a set camera. The former consists of a shallow gutter of metal, held by a long handle. The powder is distributed along this gutter and not piled in a heap, and is fired by the explosion of a cap, the trigger being simple and positive in its working. From former experiments I expect to use from 3 to 3½ ounces of flash powder.

The second lamp is intended to set by a runway, so that the deer may take his own photograph. It consists of a perfectly light-tight box into which the camera is set, lens open and slide drawn ready to take an exposure. The pan of flash-powder is placed on top of the box and covered with a very thin paper to protect it from damp, and is fired by a small electric battery. A thread is stretched from a door in the box across the runway, and at the lightest pull of the thread the door flies open, makes connection and fires the flash, and drops again in position. This sounds quite complicated, but is, in fact, very simple indeed.

This allows one to set his apparatus out before dark, and if exposed during the night it is safe from light inside the light-tight box.

These two lamps are made by Mr. Charles Mills, of New York, who has brought flashlight to a high state of perfection. While very short focus lenses are to be avoided for pictorial and landscape work, they are advantageous for this sort of work, since so many more planes are in fairly good focus.

ON the set camera—a 4x5—I use a Goerz lens of 3½ inches focal length. This allows the deer to be several feet on either side of the runway and still be in good focus. Of course the image is small, but such subjects are best suited to enlargement and lantern slides.

A very rapid plate should be used, such as Seeds No. 27, and should be developed in metol, which yields soft, delicate negatives, full of gradations and detail, such negatives as are best suited to lantern slides and enlargements. When washing water is warm, rinse the plate after leaving the fixing bath and place in a solution of 1 part formalin, 500 parts water, for a minute or two. This toughens the film and so allows of longer washing without the danger of blisters, etc.