

PHOTOGRAPHY FOR THE BEGINNER

WINTER PHOTOGRAPHY

By L. W. BROWNELL

A GREAT many amateurs are apt to consider the winter season a poor one for photographic work out-of-doors, and, in consequence, lay aside their cameras with the advent of the cold weather. To be sure, outdoor photography in the winter is attended with more or less discomfort in the way of cold hands and feet, and yet some of the most beautiful results in landscape work can be obtained when the snow is on the ground.

To get the best possible results a non-halation, orthochromatic plate is the best to use, for it gives the best tone values in the snow, while, if an ordinary plate is used, the snow will usually photograph a dead, hard white, with none of the softness and half-tones which should be there.

We must remember, in making exposures on a snow landscape, that the light is intensified by the reflection from the snow, and, therefore, the exposure must be considerably shorter than for the same landscape without the snow; but, on the other hand, we must be careful not to under expose, for that will give undesirable harshness to the negative. On a bright day, when using a fast plate and the lens stopped to f. 8, the exposure should be from 1-100 to 1-50 of a second; in the early morning or late afternoon it would be well to double this and give at least 1-25 of a second.

And, by the way, the early morning and late afternoon are the best times for making snow studies, for then the shadows are lengthened and the masses of light and shadow form the most pleasing contrasts.

Great care should be exercised in the selection of the point of view for a landscape, and it is here that one's artistic judgment, if he has any, can aid him much more effectively than any advice. One little hint, however, may not be amiss; a photograph with a great expanse of unbroken snow in the foreground is seldom entirely pleasing. This can often be remedied by making a line of footprints across the snow or breaking up its smoothness in some such way. This should be done with judgment, however, for to overdo it would be as bad as to leave it undone.

Pictures taken against the source of light, or nearly so, with the shadows falling toward the camera, are exceedingly pleasing, but care must be taken that the sun's rays do not fall directly upon the lens, or else the exposure will be a failure.

With a full moon in a clear sky and plenty of snow on the ground the making of snow photographs by moonlight is good fun. With the lens at f. 8, and a fast plate,

the exposure required should be about three minutes for an open landscape. Where there are many trees, especially evergreens, in the composition of the picture and deep shadows, the exposure should be nearer half an hour. Never try to include the moon in one of these pictures, for even with a three-minute exposure it will move sufficiently to lose all semblance of a moon, and consequently spoil the appearance of the picture. If the moon is needed to improve the picture it can be introduced afterwards, either by painting it in the negative or by printing it from a snapshot taken of it on another negative.

In photographing falling snow, which should only be attempted when the snow is falling slowly and in large flakes, it is necessary that there should be a dark background of buildings or trees in order that the falling snow should stand out clearly. To avoid having blurred streaks, which are caused by flakes falling too near to the lens, it is necessary to place the camera under some covering, such as a porch, shed, or even an umbrella, so that several feet may intervene between the lens and the falling snow. A rapid plate should be used and the exposure made about 1-10 or 1-25 of a second with the lens wide open or nearly so. The focus should be made upon some object in the foreground which will throw distant objects somewhat out of focus and tend to add to the general effectiveness of the picture.

A great deal of the success of snow pictures lies in the treatment of them in development, and a perfect exposure may be entirely ruined by improper development. (This is true of all branches of photography, and in my next article I intend to treat of developing.) The great beauty of a snow picture should be its delicacy and tone values, therefore be extremely careful not to carry your development too far, and thus choke up all the half tones. On the other hand, the negative should not be under-developed, for that will give black, muddy-looking snow, which is undesirable. In other words, the development should be carried to just that point that will produce a delicate negative full of good detail; snappy without being hard and in which the shadows are transparent, not mere blotches of black, and the snow brilliant but full of good half tones. This is a perfect negative, provided the sky has some clouds or at least tone to it, and is not a pure glaring white, and can be obtained by careful manipulation of the camera and of the negative in the dark room.