

COURSE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR AMATEURS

THE OREGONIAN'S HOME STUDY CIRCLE—DIRECTED BY PROF. SEYMOUR EATON

XIV.—PHOTOGRAPHING INTERIORS.

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In the matter of equipment an ordinary camera, whether it costs \$2 or \$20, can be used, but it must be confessed it is frequently an advantage in cramped situations to have a wide-angle lens. It is to say, one that includes a larger field than the lenses ordinarily supplied with most cameras. In addition to the regular outfit I would recommend the purchase of a spirit level, which can be got either in circular form, about the size of a quarter, or in the ordinary straight form, one about three inches long being a convenient size. I bought one of the latter about seven years ago and it has cropped in my left vest pocket ever since, and I find it one of the handiest tools I carry. If you are hanging a picture there is no doubt about getting it perfectly level. If you have it to do to a picture by the level to the frame. The level is just as useful when you are fastening a bracket to the wall, and so in hundreds of other cases. In fact, I use it almost every day. In making negatives, no matter whether landscape, portrait or interior, I level the camera—that is, I make sure that the plate is perpendicular to both direct and indirect light. This prevents any producing the ridiculous scenes and portraits that one sees so often.

Just a word about how to use the level. The camera should be set up on a level of the tripod toward the object being photographed, the other two to the rear, so that in working the photographer will stand between the camera and the object. In position, if a circular level be used on top of the back a little movement of the front leg of the tripod will soon get the bubble in the center, and when that is accomplished the plate will be perpendicular.

With a straight level the work is a little more complicated, at least to describe, but in practice it is very easy. Begin by placing the level on the back of the camera and pointing toward the lens; a slight movement of the front leg and the bubble may be made to go to the center. This accomplishes the level to its original direction and make any final adjustment that may be necessary. Any negative now made with the camera will show perpendicular lines as such and not lines falling to one side or the other, as one too frequently sees in the average photograph of buildings, whether the view be exterior or interior.

Another point deserving much consideration in all kinds of photography, but especially in interior work, is the height of the camera. The camera should be as high as possible, and the lens should be as high as possible. It is impossible to travel over the field of perspective in an article like this, but my readers can see for themselves a couple of plates on an interior, one with the lens about 3 1/2 feet from the ground and the other about 5 1/2 feet. In the one print the floor will look at a pitch just as steep a slope, while in the other it will look a natural. The illustration shows this point to a minor degree. The lens, it is evident, was just a few inches above the level of the top of the mantle shelf—that is, a medium height—but it would have given a more pleasing effect had it been almost a foot lower.

Focusing is sometimes a little difficult, but the difficulty can be overcome by using a candle flame. More important, however, is to know the exact point to focus. We are bound to use a comparative small stop in order to get a comparative large exposure necessary, but a little discrimination in selecting the exact point on which to focus will enable us to attain sharp results in almost every possible case, and thus attain the shortest possible exposure.

Most camera users know that if they focus on an object a certain distance from the lens they find that the objects in front of it and behind it are sufficiently sharp. The distance between these two points is the depth of focus of the lens. By using a spirit level, and by the depth of definition in both directions. Here comes a little problem: Given a near object and a distant one, where should we focus to get the best definition and what is the largest stop we can use?

I will not bother going into the mathematics of this, but the following table is compiled for the users of the ordinary 3 1/2 inch camera, which includes, I fancy, most of my readers:

The central figures in the above table in bold type show the focus point; the numbers to the left and right are the nearest and far points. The use of the table can best be exemplified by an example. We will suppose the subject to be the interior shown in the illustration. The nearest object is the chair, which probably was about six feet away, while the most distant