

INTRODUCTION

WHAT THE PIGMENT PROCESSES HAVE TO OFFER

THOSE who make photographs may be divided into three main categories

- (a) Record and scientific workers.
- (b) Makers of pictorial photographs *qua* photographs.
- (c) *Picture-makers* working in the photographic medium.

With the first very estimable body of enthusiasts we shall have little in common in this book. The two other categories are often somewhat broadly dealt with as "Pictorialists" pure and simple. In reality it is more logical to separate the two categories, as it is upon the postulation of a common basis of endeavour for both types of worker that much of the heated discussion on the subject of "control" is founded, and this erroneous postulate is also to be found at the base of the very considerable opposition often manifested against the processes which we propose to deal with in this volume.

Photographers included in class (b) commonly style themselves "purists", or "straight photographers"; while those in class (c) are apt to stress the word "art" in connection with their work, sometimes with a suspicion of a capital A. In reality these two types of people are not aiming to do the same thing at all, and hence the infuriated discussion of the pros and cons of manual manipulation as distinct from the action of light and chemical reagents can have no finite ending because based upon the fundamental misconception that the results achieved by the two methods of working should obey the same canons.

The "purist" is out to produce a picture which, above all, is to be a photograph, i.e., a light writing. It is just as well if it can be made to conform to some of the demands of other representational arts, but this is not absolutely essential so long as "photographic quality", by which is mainly meant accurate rendering of gradation, is present. Correct exposure and a detailed knowledge of the habits of plates, papers, and developers are the main essentials of success in this method.

The third class of worker regards photography merely as the means, and not at all the end of his endeavours. Photographic gradation is only one of his tools, by which he tries to convey his impressions of what he sees about him. He looks upon his picture as a work of graphic art, and the fact that it is a photograph, or shall we say, involves in its production certain photographic processes, is quite a secondary consideration. Compliance with the canons of other monochrome graphic arts, now generally accepted after centuries of evolution, is with him a *sine qua non*. Many workers of this type are those who, through lack of time or opportunity, have been unable to learn to draw or to paint, but who, nevertheless, have something to say in graphic form, and who find themselves capable of saying it, to their own and to others' satisfaction, when a craft with a simpler technique is open to them. Many bromoilers, well-known or otherwise, carry on a certain amount of sketching in one or other medium, and find it altogether compatible with their bromoil work.

To those, therefore, who merely wish to make photographs there will be little incentive to try the processes described in this book. Their only asset in so doing will be to obtain the quality of the bromoil pigment in their otherwise untouched photographs. This is not altogether to be despised, and can be obtained without falsification of gradation in the hands of the skilled worker.

Those, on the other hand, whose main preoccupation is to produce pictures, especially when time is limited and drawing is difficult, will find the Bromoil process a willing tool, enabling them to produce pictures which can rightly claim a place with work in other monochrome media, the

limits to which they can reach being only dependent on their own outlook and accomplishments. When the transfer processes are employed the gelatine-coated paper is no longer necessary in the final result, and the picture is in permanent ink on pure paper. Let no one think that this superficial resemblance to other graphic media is a thing to be aimed at in itself. Its advantage lies in the fact that the pure paper surface is more beautiful and varied than a gelatine surface, and also in this, that the general art-loving public is accustomed to a plain, un surfaced paper for other media, and, in the author's experience, much more readily appreciates photographic art when presented in a, to them, normal manner, than when a gelatined surface has to be swallowed, usually with the production of considerable æsthetic indigestion.

The popularisation of photographic art, the inducement of the art-buying public to purchase also photographic art, and the general setting of photographic art work on the plane of status which it deserves in the opinion of many competent observers, photographic and otherwise, are topics which give cause for much debate. The approach to normal graphic standards is, in the writer's opinion, necessary in the respects above outlined, i.e., conformity with canons of composition, chiaroscuro, etc., and utilisation of a pure paper base without special preparation peculiar to photography, and of an essentially unstable nature. This approach can best be made via the bromoil process in transferred form. It is in the hope that many will be induced to become proficient in these fascinating processes, which, once embarked upon, will readily become a tool of great power in the hands of those with the will to place on record their impressions of what appear to them the realities of life, that the author has written this account of his own methods and experiences, to serve as a guide and manual for those with similar inclinations and aims.

It is hoped that the utility of the volume will not be confined to beginners, nor to those who have already embarked upon a study of Bromoil and Transfer. The elementary precautions which the beginner should adopt are emphasized, while a critical discussion of points which

are still debatable is given for the perusal of those whose study is more extended. The summaries at the ends of the chapters will give the outstanding facts of practical significance, and these are more particularly devoted to the use of the beginner in giving him a handy reference to essential details, while allowing him readily to analyse his failures, and thus use them for further progress.