

roundings, but to enlarge the angle at which they appear. On the other hand, details are sometimes lost through bad light. The reproach that it makes objects too distinct is often made to photography; no painter would produce an object so distinctly as photography. This appears partly conscious and partly unconscious self-delusion. In a small photographic picture the details are lost, and even when they exist we do not see them at the proper distance of looking at a picture. It may happen even that large-leaved plants are found in the foreground so that in the picture the leaf-veins show—of course, with exaggerated clearness. The picture is not meant to be looked at with a magnifying glass, and with a proper choice of eye distance the details—which people are so fond of calling photographic clearness—vanish very rapidly. It is unfair to compare photographic pictures with paintings. The painter paints just as clearly, but with fewer details, because the picture is intended to be looked at from a greater distance, and thereby the whole effect is rectified. Not so photographs. We are not accustomed to hang the latter in frames on our walls, high above our heads, but to arrange them in albums, and to ornament the writing table with them, altogether to arrange them so that they can be looked at closely; and therefore they must be distinct, that is, full of detail.

There are, therefore, two universal rules for the photographer. To regulate his pictures for the proper angle of sight—that is, to avoid as much as possible taking the photograph at an angle—and not to work at too short a focal distance, is the one; and the other obliges him to produce pictures rich in detail. Distinctness and indistinctness, as long as the details are not blotted out, do not come at all into notice.

Let us now turn to the means which are at the disposal of the photographer in adjusting these difficulties. They are soon enumerated—choice of subject, its position, and retouching. These are all, except the purely mechanical means, such as the use of orthochromatic plates, ready-made developers, &c. With them may be ranked also the choice of printing process, which has important influence on the effect of the picture. Choice of subject and its position is possessed in common with painters in making a sketch. But how small are the other means compared with those of the painter. Apart from the fact that the painter can leave out what seems to him undesirable, and insert into his work figures, in order to heighten the effect—which last may be attained by skilful combination of negatives—he has, over photography, the invaluable aid of colour effects.

But to return to perspective. Unity of perspective is the primary condition of a picture; just proportion of size must be present; but a painter can obtain very beautiful effects by ignoring mathematical perspective, and practising what we may call artistic licence. One example shall explain this. When we wish to draw an archway symmetrically with other arches seen through it so that the right and left sides are identical, we must place ourselves exactly before the middle line of the opening, so that we see all the following arches in the background of the picture equally symmetrically. In fig. 2 the arches are symmetrically drawn. The point of sight, therefore, ought to be placed on the middle-line. If, however, you try to find the vanishing point on it, you discover that it has been removed to the side. Why has the designer turned aside from mathematical perspective? In order to avoid too complete symmetry, which would have an

inartistic effect. More variety enters, in consequence, into the composition. This shifting of the vanishing point we often find in the pictures of the great masters.

Let us look, to select one out of a great many, at

Raphael's famous cartoon, "Paul Preaching." Paul stands here on the Areopagus of Athens on a kind of public staircase, which occupies quite three-quarters of the space on the left hand of the picture. Statues, temples, palaces, &c., fill the background, but they are, like the figures, freely grouped; there is nowhere symmetrical calm, but life and movement, and the point of sight is placed somewhat to the



Fig. 2.

right. This may be recognized by the vanishing point of the steps of the staircase, and has been purposely done by the artist to avoid the unpleasant fan-shaped arrangement of the steps, which would otherwise intrude itself.

Further, we sometimes find two points of sight in a picture. In the "Decameron," by Winterhalder, in the left-hand corner of the picture a pavilion is seen over the summits of the trees. The lines of the sills and other horizontal lines vanish to a point which is different to that of the rest of the picture. But if the artist had taken the point of sight as the vanishing point of the picture, and held to the full view, the parts of the building lying in shade would have been visible, and the effect of the light architecture against the dark foliage would have been lost. Artistic licence with regard to perspective is made

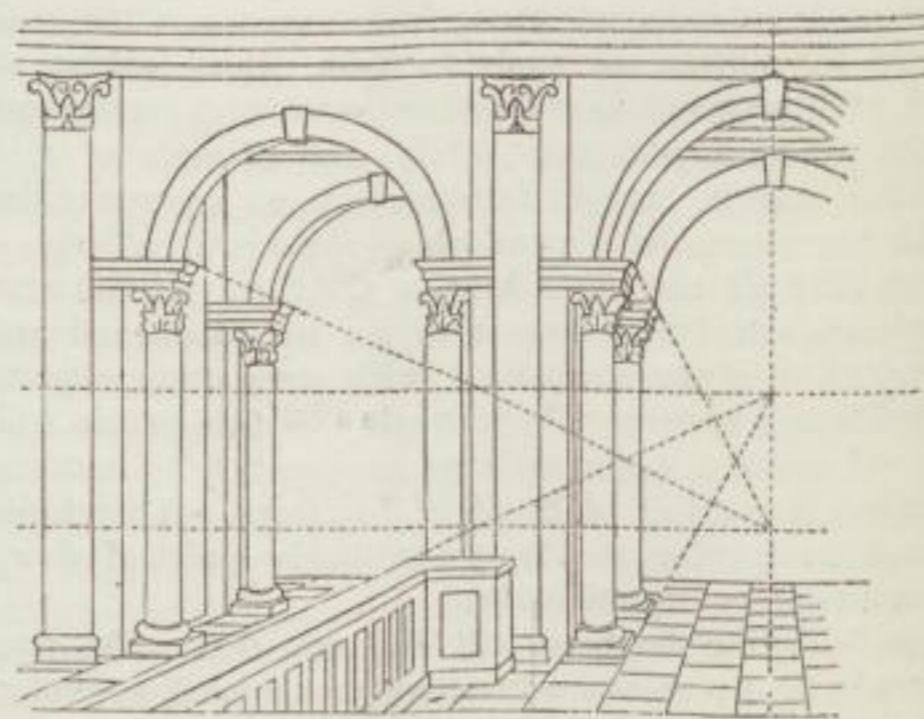


Fig. 3.

use of in a large measure where human figures enliven the picture. If perspective measurements are taken, we can often convince ourselves of the elongation of figures, as in the picture of Leonardo di Vinci, "The Last Supper;" the room here is hardly more than twice the height of