

in the centre. And yet the average photographer invariably gets his prominent object just where it should not be.

I have laid great stress on the necessity of the main lines of the composition assuming the form of some definite geometrical figure, but it must not for one moment be supposed that the art of composition begins and ends there. This is merely the framework of the structure, so to speak, and the scaffolding must not be in evidence. The art must be concealed. And this is largely attained by the judicious use of minor lines running in opposite directions. But they must be subordinate lines. Another reason exists for the use of these opposing lines, and that depends upon a mechanical fact. If any of you saw a slanting post standing alone, your first impression would probably be that it was falling, but in a very brief period of time your mind would grasp the fact that it was not falling, and then, reasoning from past experience, you would decide that since it did not fall, part of it must be underground to ensure its stability. But even then your mind would not be satisfied, and would probably induce you to say something about the carelessness of the individual who did not see that the post was not perpendicular, which by experience we know to be more stable than a slanting position. But if another post be opposed in slope to the other, the mind is satisfied, for we know that the one will support the other. So it is in a picture. All the main lines of a picture must not run in one direction, with one possible exception, and that is when all the lines are perpendicular, but they must be strengthened by other lines running in opposite directions. And this is, after all, only one more argument in favor of triangular composition.

This principle I have just been stating may be converted almost into one of general application, and worded in this fashion: that we must not have too much of one thing, even although it be good. For example, in a seashore view we may have the beach filling up entirely one half of the picture. It will start on the margin of the paper on a large scale, and the parallel lines of the sea margin and the top of the cliffs will, as they set in, appear to converge, so that toward the other margin of the paper they will occupy a very small space. Here we will have practically one-half of the paper filled with rock, and the other half a large blank, which, for all we can see in it, might be labelled "To let." Now this will not do; the composition is too monotonous, and something must be introduced into the water to break up the dull monotony, such as a boat, or a bather, or a rock. In other words the picture must not be too heavy on one side and too light on the other, but must appear to be balanced.

Still harping on this question of variety, and again you will be inclined to say, Why preach the doctrine of uniformity for a few minutes, and then surfeit with an hour on variety? Well, so far as I can judge, the subject is built that way. It is what the eye likes, and that is the subject of my paper. I want to say this, that all the lines of a picture must not be straight, nor must they all be curved. Each kind of a line has its own quality, its own kind of story to tell. Years ago I heard old Isaac Pitman, the inventor of phonography, describe the two lines thus: straight lines he called male, because they were rigid, imperious, domineering, and indicative of strength; curved lines he described as female, because they were bending, graceful,