

THE SELECTION OF THE SIDE OF THE FACE IN POR- TRAITURE.

By R. W. HARRISON.

Some ten to twenty years ago there was a good deal of dogmatism among photographers, who were considered of the better class, as to which side should be photographed in taking a quartering view of the face. Some were very positive that it was the side toward which the nose inclined, be it ever so little; another famous portraitist invariably chose the side on which the mouth was lower; still another noted the contour of the jaw, and always had the side with the greatest bulge nearest the camera. Mr. H. P. Robinson advises briefly to have the higher eye on the nearer side; another is careful to have the smaller eye closer.

The advocates of each theory would declare that his was the criterion, while an inspection of the portraits painted by men who got large fees shows that none of these rules were strictly adhered to. Of course there is this difference: we photographers are under sharper criticism, founded upon the vanity of our customers, than are the painters, and our authority is not so weighty; we therefore feel it our bounden duty to produce the most favorable likeness possible, without caring so much as to its being characteristic.

In this way portrait photography has established for itself a standard criticism, in which flattery, or at least telling the most pleasing truth, is the dominant factor, and to this fact is

due the urgency of the question "which side of the face shall be selected?"

It will be noted by a careful student of faces, that in many instances all or most of these criteria agree. For instance, the higher eye and lower side of the mouth are nearly always on the same side, and frequently the nose is turned that way, and the contour of the jaw is in conformity.

While each of these rules mentioned is a useful hint to the student, it should be observed that they are to be used or not, according to circumstances; for instance, the slant of the mouth or eyebrows can be instantly modified by the tip of the head; the contour of the jaw is of little importance if you select a quartering view of the shoulders, the face looking toward you and the light on the broader side; in fact, in this instance the reverse of this rule is best; in taking profiles the more symmetrical jaw will usually decide which side will be selected, for the jaw is of almost equal importance with the nose, especially when the light falls from behind. As far as the nose is concerned in quartering views I have frequently found the broad side as serviceable as the other.

But it would not be fair to point out where the authorities are wrong without mentioning some points where they are right. Other things being equal, it would be the proper thing to select the side toward which the nose is turned when the face is broad. In portraits where the side or quartering view of the shoulder are taken, with the face turned to-