

by the violent winds made the light so poor that prolonged exposure was needed, with the attendant risk of seeing the result spoilt by the camera shaking in the gusts. To examine the correctness of negatives so exposed would have required development of each plate on the spot. But in the intense cold still prevailing this could not be done at night without risk of the plate freezing while drying in the tent. In order to reduce the risk of total failure I laboriously took several complete rounds of the frescoes with varying light and exposure,—only to find in the end, when development became possible, some four months later, that my efforts had failed to secure an adequate record.

But even if the photographs had been more successful, I should still have keenly regretted that I had no means of reproducing those fine paintings in colour. The only alternative was to remove the frescoes themselves. In spite of my reluctance to cut up these fine wall paintings into panels of manageable size I should have felt bound to attempt it, had not a carefully conducted experiment proved that, with the means and time at my disposal, the execution of such a plan would have meant almost certain destruction.

The plaster of this wall differed materially from that in the other temple. It consisted of two layers, of which the outer one was remarkably well finished and smooth, but only a quarter of an inch thick and exceedingly brittle. The inner layer, about three-quarters of an inch thick and softer, had very little admixture of straw, and consequently broke far more easily than the wall surface of the other temple, where the plaster, being uniform in substance and full of chopped straw, possessed a good deal of cohesion. When with all due precautions I had removed a detached Putto head and one of the already injured male busts from the dado, I found it impossible to prevent parts of the thin outer layer breaking off in fragments as the plaster behind was being loosened. So I reluctantly realized that there was here no hope of safely detaching any larger piece of frescoed surface, unless the wall behind were systematically tunnelled and special appliances used for lifting off and strengthening the curving planes of stucco.

Italian fresco restorers, working with the accumulated