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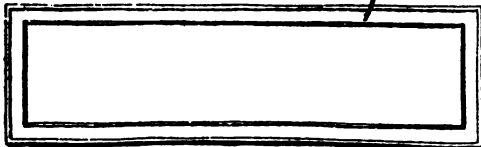


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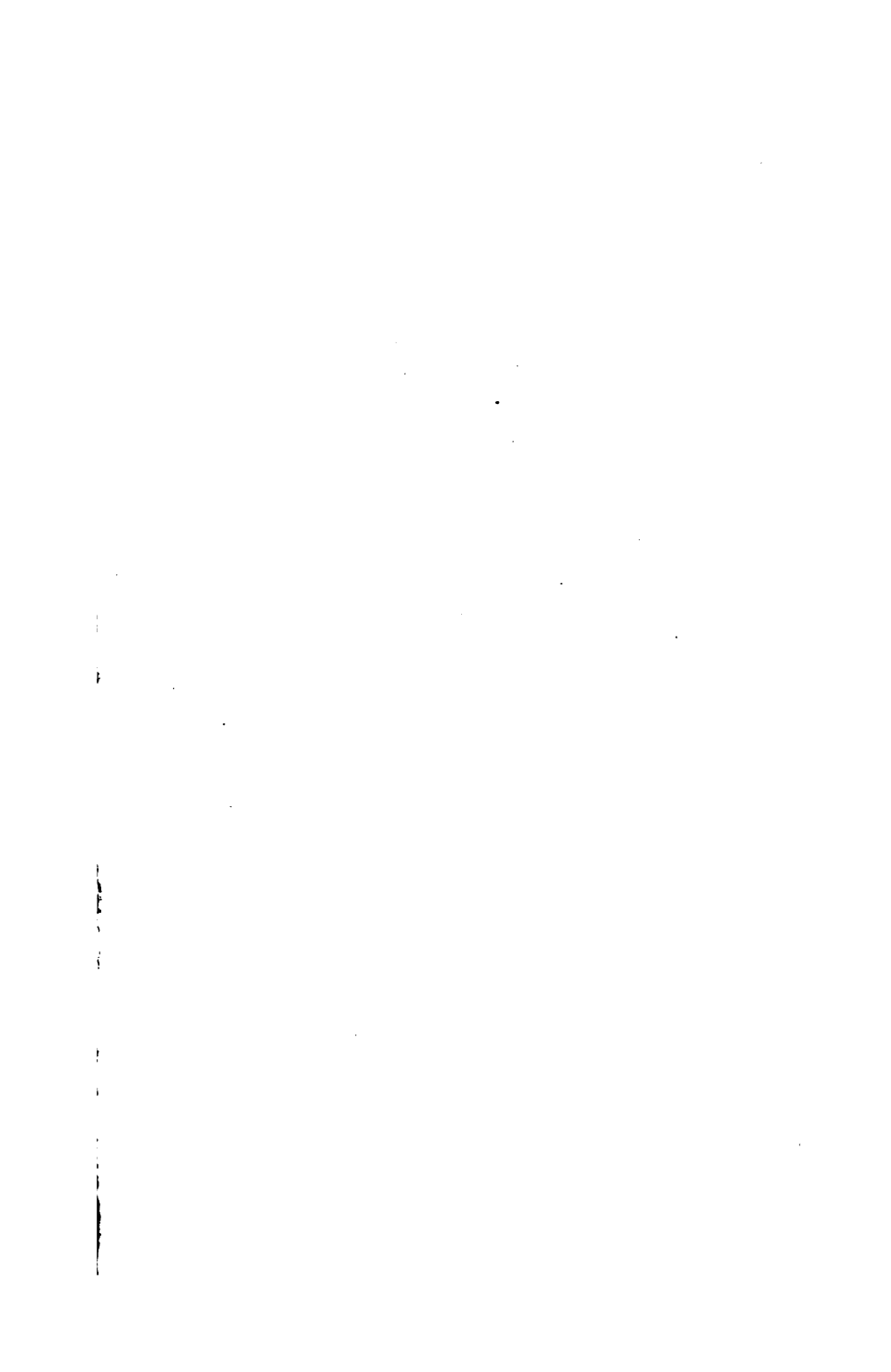


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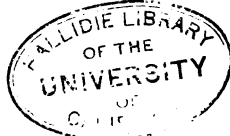
DRAWING.



BY THE REV. S. C. MALAN, M.A.

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VICAR OF BROADWINDSOR, DORSET.



LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, AND ROBERTS.

1856.

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TO VIND  
AIRBORNE



DEDICATED TO  
J. D. HARDING, ESQ.  
IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS KIND  
ADVICE, AND IN ADMIRATION  
FOR HIS TALENT.

107294





## APHORISMS ON DRAWING.

**U**OUGHT, perhaps, first of all, to apologize for the pompous title of this little book; for it sounds very self-sufficient and conceited. Nothing, however, is further from my thoughts, and, I hope, also from my style. For I feel no sympathy with certain voluminous theorists, who make rules of their own in drawing, and lay them down as a law for others.

But most of those who have had experience in drawing, from the first outline by the girl of Corinth, to the present time of "Drawing made easy," have cultivated the art more or less in a way of their own; and some fancy they may know something which their neighbour does not. That, indeed, is often a mistake; and it may be so in this case. It is, however, possible that a few hints in general drawing, the result of observation and of self-taught experience only, condensed in short sentences easily remembered,

may prove acceptable to some of the many lovers of Nature and of Art.

The following remarks, then, are not intended for artists who make drawing the business of their life, and to whom all of us learners are greatly indebted. I can, of course, teach them nothing. On the contrary, I have to thank one of them, Mr. J. D. HARDING, for his good advice, kindly and liberally given. Neither will I compete with those who profess to teach drawing in six, eight, or, may be, twelve lessons. That secret is their own. But I suppose my readers to be already well acquainted with the theory of light and shade, with colour, and with the rudiments of perspective. And I address myself only to those among them who, situated as I am, look upon drawing as a mere accomplishment, and who in their attempts to cultivate it, have to borrow from their own resources, and to learn their art from Nature alone.

By way of introducing the subject, then, I would ask a very plain question,—What is DRAWING? for it may be that some of those who take, or who are made to take, the pencil or the brush in hand, have not thought of this before they began.

Drawing is, generally speaking, the expression on paper, whether in pencil or in colours, of the impression which Nature makes upon the mind of the artist. Hence we may say that

## I.

Drawing is human art in imitation of Nature.

By Nature I mean, here, GOD's works and man's, although they widely differ from each other. Those are always perfect; these, on the contrary, more or less defective. For instance, we may see a beautiful effect of light, which is GOD's work, upon a building worthless in every line of design, which is man's art.

Since, however, we are often called to draw natural objects of man's making, such as buildings, furniture, &c.—we may consider drawing in a twofold aspect; as *positive* or *real*, and as only *relative*.

## II.

Real Drawing is an image of GOD's works;

from which model real drawing cannot depart. For this model is the only true pattern of all pure and perfect taste, and all genuine art comes from it only.

In this respect drawing differs very materially from its sister art, music. For in music we have,

in fact, no perfect pattern to follow; nothing like Nature in drawing. True, there are rules of melody and laws of harmony which cannot be broken, without at the same time destroying the very character of music, which depends on them. But still, the finest model in music is but a human production, and therefore not perfect. So that unless we could hear the self-taught choirs of heavenly voices singing the praises of GOD in *perfect* harmony and with faultless melodies,—however great the musical genius, however sublime the conception, however deep and soul-stirring the harmony of a composer be, it is nevertheless *relative* to other human productions of the same kind, and not itself an imitation of a heavenly, that is, of a perfect model. On the contrary, one of the charms of music consists in its creative power over its own outline, melody. But both drawing and music come from the soul and return thither. Music draws melody and paints harmony with notes, as painting does with pencil and colours. And yet music is more free than drawing.

For as regards drawing, we have a model from which we dare not part, that is, Nature; it is perfect; it is GOD'S own workmanship; we cannot exceed, nay, we never can even reach it. Un-

fortunately, then, for human conceit, we may always compare our imitation with the original, which, from its very nature and character, is itself our **RULE**; and thus we have ample opportunity of being self-convinced, and of course corrected, if open to correction. Hence, too, in proportion as our feeling of the beauties of Nature is greater, are we less satisfied with our own drawing in imitation of them.

This feeling of disappointment, however, seldom, if ever, occurs in

### III.

#### **Relative Drawing ;**

for this is an imitation of man's work, and what one man did, another man may have a chance of accomplishing as well.

But, even in this secondary kind of drawing, conventional and artistic though it be, we find that the nearer it comes to the character of Nature, the better it is. By character of Nature I mean the fact that

### IV.

#### **In Nature everything has a meaning ;**

that is, every object is exactly adapted to the place it occupies, and to the purpose for which it was made. In a tree, for instance, there is not a

branch, not a twig, not a leaf out of place: for they are, every one of them, where they should be, for some wise purpose. A feature, then, in the beauty of each is its evident purpose, which tends to one point—harmony.

Thus, then, those men who in their mode of life were most conversant with Nature, have produced the best outlines, because those outlines were done with a purpose, and therefore they have a meaning. Take, for instance, the commonest object of domestic life, a water-jug, and compare the same article made by a Greek or an Etruscan potter, may be, three thousand years ago, with another, the effort of modern genius. The former is beautiful in its outline; the latter, most likely, grotesque. The one has a meaning, because its shape harmonizes with its use; the other, on the contrary, is meaningless, for it does not answer its purpose.

The object of the Greek or of the Etruscan potter was to enable a person who bought his jug to pour water out of it as easily as possible, and, of course, with one hand only. We find, accordingly, in the best of those ancient models, that their shape is calculated to hold a liquid in strict accordance with the laws of gravity,—a high bowl on a narrow base, with the handle so made



as to enable one to poise the jug by shifting the hand, and with it the centre of gravity, according to the greater or less quantity of liquid contained in the jug. We, therefore, are left to admire the beautiful outline, full of meaning, because full of purpose, of those antique objects of common art, and to regret that those designs are not perpetuated for our own use.

Such points, however, do not seem to have occurred to many artistic potters of the present day, who seem to think the sole merit of their work lies in the painting, and by no means in the object for which their articles are made. Provided the flowers painted on the outside be sufficiently gaudy to attract notice, it little matters about the rest. The jug may be, as it often is, very wide at the base, so as to throw the whole weight of the liquid as low as possible; and the handle also, may be at the same time hardly large enough to admit a small hand; and it may be placed even higher than the lip of the jug, thereby rendering the process of pouring water impossible with one hand and difficult with two. Then of course the result is, that as there is no meaning, because there is no real purpose, in the shape of that jug, the outline of it is out of proportion, out of rule, and therefore it is vicious.

I have chosen such a familiar example of relative art because it will occur to everybody, and will show how little modern taste has improved upon the chaste outline of ancient work. This painful fact was never more evidently set forth than in the gorgeous display of modern art at the Exhibition of 1851. There, amid a profusion of so-called ornament, there was a dearth of really good outline,—of adaptation of shape to the purpose for which the articles were made.

But, whether real or relative, Drawing presupposes three things:

A CORRECT EYE,—to convey the impression of Nature:

A CULTIVATED MIND,—to form that impression; and

A CLEVER HAND,—to transmit that impression to others.

There can be no drawing without those three things.

V.

A correct eye,

implies not only a good organ of sight, but also that faculty of the mind by which we judge through the eye of distance, of perspective, and of form. The organ of colour is distinct from that.

## VI.

**A cultivated mind,**

implies the moral and the intellectual faculties which enable us to feel the relative bearing of the artistic soul of Nature—light and shade—upon the form or outline thereof; and which, therefore, enable us to form a correct estimate of their combined effect.

It clearly results from this, that since we have in Nature a perfect model to follow, our imitation of it must be either right or wrong. And in proportion as we depart from Nature to follow a design of our own, do we also degenerate from real to relative art.

That is clearly proved by the style, as it is called, of Mediæval (or even of Pre-Raphaelite) artists. They did, and do, draw, regardless of TRUTH, after a fashion of their own, and not after Nature. Their wry-headed figures in buckram, their glaring colours, their utter carelessness about light and shade, their trees like brooms or cabbage-tops, their hills like sugar-loaves, their flowers stuck here and there in the ground, and their houses out of perspective,—may possibly, in their opinion, suit the kind of illustration to which they are often consecrated, but that is not DRAWING.

And it seems a great pity that the idea of devotion, which of right belongs to drawing,—since drawing is an image of GOD'S fairest works,—should be forced into an incongruous alliance with such abnormal objects as half the illustrations intended to edify and to teach. For such designs are not Nature; far from it. They are the offspring of a crude and artificial taste, and not of a genuine feeling or love for the beautiful. And it really seems a paradox, that in devotional books, intended to lead and to raise the soul to GOD, men should aim at doing it through unnatural and distorted images of His own perfect works.

In addition to a cultivated mind, capable of appreciating rightly the soul and spirit of True Nature, drawing requires also

#### VII.

#### A clever hand ;

a hand naturally so formed as to handle the pencil or the brush easily and freely ; so as to let it obey, as it were instinctively, the impulse of the mind, acted upon through the eye.

Strange to say, the one of those three things that can best be dispensed with, is perfect SIGHT.

The mind and the hand will supply whatever deficiency of sight we may suffer from, provided what we have of it left be correct. One of the first landscape painters in the world at the present time, Mr. A. Calame, lost one eye when quite young; Chantrey had only one eye; and there are others who share also with those artists the same infirmity.

On the other hand, the most indispensable of those three requisites is the MIND. If it exist in a decided degree, it will show itself somehow. For if the hand be naturally stiff or clumsy, it will yet obey the mind to a great extent, and under a formal outline we shall discover here and there touches of life and sparks of mind. But a clever hand and a correct eye alone, without mind, will only make a Chinese copyist; they will only produce a cold, lifeless, and uninteresting, because unreal, effort of labour, and no drawing. It is the mind infused into the artist's touch that gives to a drawing its superiority over a photograph of all objects, except, perhaps, of details in architecture.

Hence it is evident—

1. That no one can ever *learn* drawing who is not naturally qualified for it; since drawing requires a combination of gifts which

can only be improved, but never acquired by practice. And—

2. That since drawing results from a combination of moral, of intellectual, and of mechanical acts, it requires that these should be full grown and fully developed, in order that drawing may possess its full and perfect character. This character, or *style*, is partly the result of training; but training implies aptitude; and, in drawing, as in most other things, aptitude is talent. Talent, which, however, only follows in the footsteps of others, is not common; but Genius, which makes rules and a way for itself, is rarer still.

Where talent, or aptitude, exists, it will show itself early; then teaching and training follow each other with success; not else. For, learning to draw is

#### VIII.

To develop natural talent by teaching and by practice.

As to *teaching*, since drawing requires a correct eye, a cultivated mind, and a clever and steady hand, it is of no great use to teach children to

draw before the age of fifteen or sixteen. After that age, a talented person will make more progress in six months, than before it, in perhaps as many years. At the age of twelve or thirteen, however, if the child shews decided aptitude for drawing, he might, with advantage, learn to draw large heads in chalk. That is the only style of drawing that will give a firm touch and form a flexible hand; and two or three years at least of this training should be considered as an indispensable foundation, in learning to draw, whatever the superstructure may be, whether flowers, figures, landscapes, or even architecture.

It trains the eye, and forms the hand better than any other style. It lays a ground-work that will bear any other kind of drawing after it; and it gives a mastery over the outline and the shadows of form, which no other branch of the art will give. It is, therefore, a mistake to begin, for instance, landscape, or even flower-drawing, with the study of landscape, or of flowers only. It should be begun with studies of heads, the size of nature, practising for some time; after which, more progress will be made in landscape and in the delicate tints and life-shadows of flowers, in the course of a short time, than would be made in a much longer period, without the previous

training of the eyes and of the hand, by drawing heads and other parts of the human figure on a large scale. This is, of course, only if our object be to draw *well*. If we be satisfied with drawing only *prettily*, we may then begin and learn as we like best.

As regards a *master*, better it is you should be left to your own unaided resources, than be taught by an inferior artist. Not all who call themselves artists are such; for, more goes to make one than falls to the lot of many. Many artists shew, in their drawing, practice without either mind, or a real knowledge of what they attempt. Many of them also are confirmed mannerists. They have, may be, one, or, at the most, two stereotype images of trees in their mind; because they are *artists*; that is, they have studied *art* and not *nature*. Their figures, too, are all of the same dress, colour and stamp; with white or red caps, and bright green or blue jackets; and rarely below six or seven feet in height. But that is neither Nature nor Nature's image-drawing. It is conventional art, and quite distinct from Nature.

If, therefore, you can have the advantage of a really good master, who both understands what he does, knows what he teaches, and knows how to teach it, a few lessons from such a man will



make difficulties easy, by putting you at once on the right road to correct and effective drawing. If, on the other hand, you are so situated, in the country for instance, as to be debarred from such help, you can yet do a great deal, nay, you may do almost everything by yourself.

You have, I trust, a correct eye; open it, and look;

## IX.

Look, and reason on what you see;

study the endless grace of outline, in the tree that waves in the morning breeze and fans you at noon; follow the mazes of its foliage; and breathe the light air that bears its elegant masses, and plays among them. Mark the stem; how the light and chequered shade of the foliage falls upon it, and gives it life; see also the branches, what vigour in their joints, what life, what expression in their sinuous forms; and the gnarled roots of the tree, with what power they grasp the soil and enter into the very heart of the earth. When you see all that, and *feel* it, you have only to take pencil and paper, and you must draw.

Or else, follow that bright gleam of light that pours down from the hill, over the meadow grass; and which, after sparkling in the ripple of the

stream, falls upon the smoking chimney of the woodman's hut, sheltered under the dark foliage of the pine-wood beyond. When you see and *feel* those things, you have only to take colours and paper, and you must paint. Not well, at first; nor yet, perhaps, after several attempts: but every effort you make to imitate that faultless model brings you nearer your object, which is to convey to yourself and to others a lasting impression of your love of Nature, and of your feeling of its beauties.

For it is only in proportion as we converse with GOD'S works in Nature, that we grow to understand them, to enter into their pure and perfect beauty; and thereby learn to paint or to draw. The more we look into them, the more also we see to admire. For we see GOD in them. Whereas the more we look into the works of man, the more imperfection we find.

The only school, then, for a true and genuine taste of the beautiful, is NATURE. From it alone come all the best forms and the truest outlines; and to it, after all, return, as by common consent, all the finest efforts of human art and genius.

For,—

## X.

**Nature is Truth ;**

and Art is but a poor attempt at an imitation of it. That taste, therefore, is, in reality, most genuine, that looks for ideas of beauty in Nature and not in art; in the faultless elegance of a well-grown tree, for instance, rather than in the stiff and formal outline of even the best architectural designs. Each has its characteristic beauty of form. But the one is natural, that is, genuine; and the other is artistic, that is, made up.

But although Nature is the only master from which we ought to borrow our touch and our expression of its character, we learn much from good works written by able and clever men. There are many of the kind. But the treatises on drawing in general, and on landscape in particular, with which I am best acquainted, and which I can thoroughly recommend, are Mr. HARDING'S. His studies of trees especially deserve great praise. With such books to study at home, and Nature to copy out of doors, your aptitude for drawing will soon develope itself into a correct style of your own.

For since drawing results from the mind, be-

ware of endeavouring to imitate any one artist in particular, but

## XI.

**Form your own style upon Nature.**

Learn the principles of art of whom you may best, and follow good advice as to your work; but educate your taste, train your eye, and form your hand on Nature. It is the only perfect master. For even the best of teachers cannot be followed implicitly, since they show, side by side with flashes of genius, proofs of oversight, or of inferiority in some things. Raphael, for instance, ought never to have attempted landscape in any way; his back-grounds often kill his perfect figures. Thus, on the cartoon of the miraculous draught of fishes, not only is the perspective of the water incorrect, (judging at least from the copies I have seen,) but both OUR SAVIOUR and St. Peter are put together in a boat too small to carry one man in safety, much less two. In the celebrated fresco of the Lord's Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci, the table, as it is drawn, cannot possibly stand; for the trusses on which it rests have only one side. OUR SAVIOUR'S head, also, is drawn in the centre of a square window, the opening of which takes from the effect of the light and shade on that Divine

head. The whole picture would have been better if the table had been laid in the length, and not in the breadth, of the room. In like manner, that great master, Salvator Rosa, often painted trees and rocks of his own, with a masterly touch it is true, but still not always after the model of Nature.

So true it is that *style* in drawing proceeds from the mind of the artist more than from practice, that a want of uniformity in it is both apparent and unpleasant to the eye. Thus, we find that pictures, in which the trees are done by one artist, and the figures, or the cattle, by another, in general do not answer. They are wanting in uniformity, because they are not wholly done by the same mind. And since one man does not know what, or how, another man feels; and since the minds of no two men are entirely alike, it follows that the figures, or the cattle, in such pictures, do not in fact belong to the rest. This defect will not strike everybody; because few persons, comparatively, are good judges of drawing. But the defect exists, nevertheless.

Under these circumstances, then, and since your drawing ought to be the child of your mind and of your soul,

## XII.

**Guard against mannerism and fashion.**

Do not, therefore, draw in such or such a style, because some great master does it; but be more independent, and copy Nature. And, as to admiring anything, only because others do so, without feeling admiration for it yourself, it would argue in you no knowledge of drawing, and no faculty to appreciate its merits.

I recollect being one day at Citta di Pieve, where, as a matter of course, I was taken from one end of the town to the other, in order to see some of Perugino's pictures. I got weary of his figures awry and dressed in buckram, and of his buildings out of perspective, and I was reluctantly passing through the sacristy of a church, to be shewn some more of them; when I beheld, nailed against the wall, but without a frame, a beautiful oil-painting of OUR SAVIOUR giving the keys to St. Peter. It was a relief, at last, to dwell on those fine figures, dressed in good drapery; and I asked my guide if he could tell me the author of that painting.

He shrugged his shoulders, and said, "he did not know; it was nobody's; for it had no frame!"

On another occasion I was asked to accompany a few friends to see some of Raphael's pictures, in one of the palaces at Rome. While my companions, Murray in hand, were inspecting the works of the great master, I strolled into a room adjoining, in which, among other pictures I noticed a very beautiful Virgin and Child; author unknown. I went to call my friends, and begged they would come and admire the face and the expression of the female figure. "What, that!" said one of them; "Let us see: oh, it is not in Murray!" And so saying he left the room.

That absurd imitation of others in drawing is often carried as far even as the *touch*; but this is, assuredly, a waste of time and of labour. For, as the touch, like the hand-writing, depends on the personal character or disposition of the artist, it can no more be acquired than that disposition or character. We all learn to write alike, and yet we all write differently; and, however much we may prefer some hand-writing to our own, we cannot exchange this for that, unless we can also borrow the moral or the mental features of the person whose hand-writing we admire most.

So also in drawing. It is impossible for a person, whose mind is always occupied with details rather than with the aim, point, or general bear-

ing of things, to seize, for instance, the principal and most marked features of a landscape, whether in outline or in light and shade, wherein lie the expression and the meaning of that scene, and make that the chief object in drawing; regardless of minor details that would disturb the harmony and the relative features of the whole. Likewise, a person of a close and avaricious disposition, with little or no generosity of heart, and who of course shows it in a small, angular, close handwriting, will never acquire a bold and dashing style of drawing. The mind is engrossed with secondary objects, and the hand is encumbered by them; and then, of course, the touch is small, harsh, stiff, and wanting in natural grace, and the colouring is lifeless. The greens are sallow, the lights are dull, and the shadows have no transparency.

Not so, however, where the disposition is different. A person who naturally dislikes details, and aims only at truth and effect, will show it in his style of drawing. This may possibly be less accurate in all respects than a more studied and more particular style, but it is far more effective. It may bear a less minute investigation, but it possesses more truth, and pleases better than a more cramped or formal touch; the colouring,



too, will be rich and glowing, the lights bright, and the shadows aerial and transparent.

For, after all, in drawing, as in writing, the mind is of more importance than the touch. A bunch of flowers, for instance, roughly done, but alive, that is, with the lights and shadows at the right place, will please a great deal more, because it is more true, than the elaborate drawing of a Chinese artist, in which there is neither light nor shade, and therefore no life and no truth. The main point is, then, not so much the touch as the feeling of the mind that forms it. When once we understand Nature, and seek to express our understanding of it on paper, the touch must follow, as a matter of course, and be formed from it.

There are, however, certain things which may either assist or hinder in the acquisition of a bold and true style of drawing.

For instance, the use of a fine and hard pencil, and of a small copy, with white paper highly hot-pressed, will effectually cramp the hand. But a soft pencil, BB, BBB, or BBBB, smooth and soft lightly-tinted paper, with large copies at home, and Nature abroad, will, on the contrary, give a bold and free style; at least, they will materially contribute towards it. Likewise, in water-colours, if you paint with a small brush, much colour

and little water, on smooth paper, the effect of your drawing when done will be harsh, heavy, woolly, and without any of that transparency which constitutes the chief beauty of water-colours. If, on the other hand, you accustom yourself to work with a very large brush (provided it has a good point), abundance of water, comparatively little colour, and on rough paper, your outlines may be harsh at first, but that will correct itself in time. And they will be well defined, and characteristic; your work will possess an airy transparency, and you will acquire a freedom of touch that nothing else can give.

By transparency, I mean, not of tints only, but of actual colour, showing through it the original white of the paper; which is, I apprehend, the characteristic feature of true water-colour painting. This transparency disappears in the style of water-colours generally practised at present, in which Chinese white is freely admitted and profusely used. As it is taught and advocated by artists of great ability, I will abstain from expressing freely my mind on the subject. I will simply say, that it appears to me to be a style neither one thing nor the other; neither strictly body-colours nor purely water-colours; and thus eminently artificial and not real. The dullness

and opacity of coloured lights when put on, does not harmonize with the transparency of the tints on which the lights are laid.

Much also depends on the way in which you hold the pencil or the brush. If you hold either as you do a pen in writing, that is, resting against the tip of the middle finger, and tightly held between the thumb and the fore-finger, you never will draw ; or, at least, your touch will always remain stiff and graceless. The pencil or the brush should be held lightly ; it should rest on the flat side of the middle finger, above the root of the nail, and almost upon the first joint. The whole length of the tip-joint of the fore-finger then falls naturally upon the pencil, and holds it slightly ; and the thumb, a little curved, gently presses the pencil, opposite the first bend of the fore-finger. The pencil, or the brush, held in that manner, may be turned and handled in any way you please ; and with the little finger alone resting on the paper, and acting like a spring, the hand is so disposed as of necessity to give you a free and easy touch.

Then, again, avoid all fictitious means, invented by those who profess to teach “ drawing made easy ;” such as the *camera lucida*, or *obscura*, etc. If you can draw, you do not, assuredly, re-

quire them ; if you cannot draw, you may rely upon it those contrivances will never teach it you. But rather,

## XIII.

**Train your Eye.**

A correct eye is invaluable ; with it you cannot do wrong, without it you never will do right. It is well to learn a few elementary rules of perspective, as it saves time ; but unless your eye feels them, and leads you to correct and to alter your lines until they be right, and your eye be satisfied—rules alone will not gratify either yourself or those who look at your drawings. So true it is that, for instance, two drawings of the same interior, one done by an architect, with rule and compasses, and every particle of linear perspective strictly adhered to—the other done with the eye and the hand alone, which aims at having the leading lines correct, and leaves many details to take care of themselves, will produce very different effects. The first, painfully laboured and accurate, will excite our wonder and admiration ; the latter will gratify us more. In this one the play of light and shade among the piles of the building will more than make up for the details of drawing,

overlooked here and there. Why is that? Because the one is the lifeless result of rule; the other is the joint work of the eye, of the mind, and of the hand, all in one.

For, after all, what we admire in drawing is,

#### XIV.

### The Artist's Mind rather than his Art.

A single stroke of the pencil, or of the brush, shows the mind that orders it, and the spirit with which it is done. In one artist the touch is stiff, small, hesitating, painfully studied, and utterly wanting in truth and in effect. In another, we find it, on the contrary, free, bold, often unaccountable, and yet full of spirit, of life, and of truth. What, then, makes the difference? The pencil, the paper, the model are the same for both. Even so; but the souls of both artists are not alike. One is a slave, the other rules; one never rises above mediocrity, the other never sinks so low; one only copies, the other both copies and creates at the same time. One drawing, in short, is not real, it is only conventional, and purely artistic; the other breathes the life of the original, whatever that be. That one follows rigidly the rules of art; this, on the other hand,

is more independent; it asserts a certain mastery even over art itself, which it follows only in so far as art helps to represent Nature with feeling and with truth. The slave of art aims at drawing objects as he fancies they are; the born-draughtsman is satisfied with doing all he can do, that is, in giving the embodied soul and spirit of what he *sees*, and no more.

How can that be, say perhaps some of a modern school of painting, distinguished by a remarkable adherence to impossibilities—if both copy Nature?

So it is, however; for we must bear in mind that, when we look at a landscape, or at any other extensive object, the eye in fact embraces exactly only one thing, or point, at a time. Every object, but the particular one upon which our eyes are fixed at the moment, is noticed only in part. Habit, perhaps, makes us overlook this fact, but it nevertheless is so. In a good picture, therefore, this rule is observed; and, while the one object on which the eyes are intended to dwell in particular is worked out fully, surrounding objects and details are left much less elaborate; witness Murillo's best pictures.

Those artists, therefore, sin against plain common sense in drawing, who labour to finish every

corner of their picture alike. For they forget that, when we look at Nature, and carry our eyes from one point to another, so as to examine in detail every object successively, we change the perspective of all the lines in Nature at the same time that we move the eye from one object to another. So that, whereas all lines in Nature converge to one point only at one and the same time ; this, in fact, cannot be when we look at a picture in which the lines are fixed. Unless then, the perspective of touch agrees with the linear perspective of the picture, especially in the case of buildings, or other formal objects, so as to draw and fix the eye upon the centre, or principal object in the picture,— what else follows than that our work must be wanting in uniformity, because it is wanting in the harmony of all its component parts. And it becomes, in fact, twisted or distorted every time we look from one side of the picture to the other.

Let it not be supposed, however, that I disclaim all details in drawing ; I only beg for them in their proper place ; for, according to the very true Turkish proverb :

“ He who knows not the details knows not the whole.”

In drawing, especially, nothing leads to a firm and free style but a thorough knowledge of the

several particulars which, in the aggregate, form the general outline, done, it may be, with one dash of the hand. Take the human figure, for instance: one artist draws it very much like a Dutch doll, with limbs made of sticks, wound with wool; the other, with one stroke, lays life on the paper. Why? simply because, in the one case, the artist knows no details; in the other, however, the artist knows every joint, every muscle, and every sinew, and the living fibre of which they consist; and he tells all those unseen details in the one stroke of his masterly hand.

So also in every other kind of drawing, whether of trees, of flowers, or of mountains. The artist who has patiently studied the details of a tree, for instance, who knows the skeleton of it, the articulation and the direction of its branches, and therefore the shape of its masses of foliage, will not lay all those details bare, and dot his tree with almost invisible leaves. But he will give instinctively, without being always able to account for his touch, the expression of the tree, and the character of the foliage, in one bold and free outline of the whole.

We must bear in mind that, after all, a rapid style of drawing is only, as it were, running in the art. If a child attempts to run ere he can



walk, a fall must follow ; but, after he has learnt to walk, step by step, and has strengthened his gait by careful exercise and attention to it, he may then run both swiftly and with grace. It is, therefore, a mistake to try and acquire at once a bold and rapid style ; it can only come by study and by practice, since it is the result of being familiar with details. These need not always be told in drawing, but there can be no good drawing without a thorough knowledge of them.

I will suppose, then, that you are in presence of Nature, pencil or brush in hand, and about to put upon paper what your feelings are of the beauties you behold. First of all, you make a dot for each of the two or three prominent objects or points in the landscape, be they buildings, trees, or hills, or even parts of them, which you take particular care to place at a correct distance and position relatively to one another. You sketch roughly those objects that are to act as landmarks in your drawing, and you fill in afterwards, in good perspective, both aerial and linear.

What is now your object? It is to produce a good effect ; that is, to put the light and shade of your drawing in correct relation to the outline of it. What then is EFFECT? It is—



## XV.

**Harmony in contrast;**

in contrast between light and shade, subject to aerial perspective; that is, not harsh or arbitrary, but in harmony with itself. It is *contrast*, for light is made by drawing the shadow; it is *harmony*, for without it there is confusion and no effect. Effect is the artistic life of nature; it implies, therefore,

An **OUTLINE**, and the soul thereof, which is  
**LIGHT** and **SHADE**.

The outline, then, should be—

## XVI.

**True.**

If you draw from Nature, do not invent, but follow your model truthfully. The outline is in drawing what melody is in music; and light and shade answer to harmony. There can be no good music without good melody, for harmony alone soon palls upon the ear. In like manner there is no good drawing without a good outline. This then should be

## XVII.

**Correct.**

One line only, in good expression and perspective. This line should not appear in a *painting*.

XVIII.

**Free.**

Not formal or stiff, but easy and accurate.

XIX.

**Bold.**

Fearless, but not at random.

XX.

**Alive and spirited.**

Delicate and aerial on the light side; broader and more marked on the side of the shadow; and

XXI.

**Expressive.**

For recollect, that in drawing in general, and in the outline especially, every touch should have a meaning, and

XXII.

**Every stroke should tell ;**

but never more so than in drawing or painting  
**LIGHT. For**

XXIII.

**Light is the life,**

and

## XXIV.

**Lights are the expression of the drawing.**

To explain what I mean, consider the human face: there is *light* and shade all over it, and light gives it both life and complexion; but the *lights*, the two bright specks on the pupil of each eye, give it expression. Why? because they give it a meaning, by being at their only proper place. So true is this, that one or two more such bright specks added elsewhere on the face would at once destroy its expression and its general effect, by distracting the eye, and by bringing secondary features too prominently forward. From whence we gather, as a general rule in drawing and painting, that

## XXV.

**Light is mellow;**

lower in general tint than the brighter lights.

## XXVI.

**Uniform;**

equal in tint.

## XXVII.

**In perspective :**

that is, more or less subdued, according to distance, and that

## XXVIII.

**The Lights are few ;**

for they are in the drawing what the bright specks are on the eyes ; only one or two. **LIGHTS** also should be

## XXIX.

**True ;**

that is, at the right place.

Hence we see the advantage of tinted paper for pencil-drawing ; and also the abuse to which it is liable.

The advantage of it is, to give an even tone of subdued light throughout.

The abuse of it, which we find even in tinted lithographs that bear great names in art, is, that the white lights are often profusely scattered or misplaced. In other words, the face of the drawing is dotted all over with the bright specks that of right belong only to the eyes.

We find, for instance, in those lithographs, high buildings, white throughout, from top to

bottom; whereby the aerial perspective is lost. For the brightest light on a tower, or any other such high object, falls, of course, near the ground; and the top of the building cannot possibly be as bright as the lower part, owing to the depth of atmosphere, which is greater between the eye and the top, than between that and the bottom of the tower. If the top of the tower be as bright as the lower part of it, it is at once brought as near to the eye as the bottom, which is naturally nearer; and then the aerial and the linear perspectives find themselves at variance with each other.

In the same lithographs, too, we often find distant buildings, as white as others much nearer, or on the foreground. This, too, removes those objects from their rightful place, by bringing them nearer than they can possibly be relatively to the rest of the picture.

This careless use of white lights not only destroys all aerial perspective, but it also distracts the eye, which is caught by more prominent objects than it can possibly hold at once together. From whence we gather that, since *white* is the brightest light available in drawing, nothing in drawing, whether in pencil or in water colours, should be left white on paper but what is white or bright in Nature; and nothing can be

perfectly white but either on the foreground, or very near it. For even clouds appear white, only by contrast, with the deep blue sky, or with darker tints on earth; since the atmosphere between the eye and the nearest cloud must, to a certain extent, break the rays of the sun upon the cloud, and subdue the light. In pencil-drawings on tinted paper, then, distant lights should either be brought out by simply working the shadows, which is by far the best way to insure harmony in the drawing; or else they should be laid on with a very thin touch of white, slightly tinted with the colour of the paper. For, on many tinted papers, white looks more like snow than like light.

Hence, as a general rule in drawing,

XXX.

Be rich in Light,  
and

XXXI.

Spare in Lights.

For as Light is the life of a drawing, so also

XXXII.

Lights are its eyes.

In like manner, then, as we distinguish *light* from

*lights* in a picture ; so also do we make a difference between

SHADE

and

SHADOW.

XXXIII.

Shade is the absence of light,  
and

XXXIV.

Shadow is the shade of an object.

Thus it is correct to say :—She is drawing in the shade, under the shadow of that tree.

Hence, *shade* seldom has a distinct outline, which is, generally, cast by a cloud ; but a *shadow* has one always ; and the outline of the shadow is in exact relation to the outline of the object that casts it : the angle of the sun, and of the surface, upon which the shadow falls, considered. Since all the shadows proceed from *one* point in the sky—the sun

XXXV.

Beware of *two* suns ;

one is enough for the picture. But while for each object in particular, you



## XXXVI.

Observe the same angle of light,  
otherwise the object would look crooked; yet, in  
the picture, as a whole, keep in view the

## XXXVII.

Divergence of the rays of light,  
and, therefore, of shadows too, according to the  
position of the sun in the sky. Artists who are  
careless on this point, either give a wrong angle  
to their shadows, or make the sun extend over  
several degrees of latitude; both of which are  
wrong. Thus, then, as your lights, so let your

## XXXVIII.

Shadows be true.

They can seldom if ever be *invented*. You may  
calculate the shadow cast by a square, or a round  
object, or building, upon a flat surface; but the  
shadow of a tree across the road, or against a bank,  
must be studied in Nature; it cannot be reasoned.

We see, by nothing, so much as by the out-  
line of the shadows, whether a drawing was done  
from Nature, or not. If it be done from Nature,

the shadows are alive and true; that is, they are a correct image, all things considered, of the objects that cast them. If, on the other hand, the drawing be finished and shaded at home, it is little better than—Nature in a shroud.

Lights are true, then, when

XXXIX.

**The shadows are broad.**

Rather err on this side; broad shadows are best; they give harmony to the drawing.

This applies to the shade of even large prominent features in the landscape. For instance, the shade of a mountain becomes a shadow, when considered as one feature only in the picture. That shadow had better be broad, and the sun low in the sky, if you draw from imagination. But, if possible, draw it from Nature; and see how the rugged and picturesque outline of the rocks you are sketching, falls in a deep blue shadow on the hill-side beyond. You cannot invent it; it is Nature's lesson, because it is Nature's truth.

On the breadth of the shade, or of shadows, depends their transparency; for, although our eye cannot always appreciate it fully, nevertheless

## XL.

**Shadows are transparent,**

that is, aerial; since shade, or shadow, consists in both the refraction of the rays of light, and also in the reflection of the colours of neighbouring objects. Hence, the further the shadow is from the eye, the more it partakes of the colour of the sky—blue. Hence, too, the brightest lights and the darkest shadows are always close together.

Thus, then,

## XLI.

**Shadows always agree with the sky.**

A cloudless sky will give blueish shadows; and the more so as the object that casts the shadow is of a lighter colour. A cloudy sky will cause shadows to appear of a more greyish hue; but even then, let them be broad, even, and transparent.

So true it is, that if you happen to stand on a foreground which is in the shade, under an open sky, the refraction of the blue sky overhead, and the reflection of the colours of the various objects around, will make the shade appear much lighter than when you look at it from outside the shadow.

Hence, under ordinary circumstances, a very dark foreground is a mistake. It is, I know, one of the rules of art by which to increase the distance ; but it is one of the many points in which, I believe, Art differs from Nature, and it has this disadvantage, that whereas a foreground of transparent shade places you at once upon it, in the midst of the picture, a very dark foreground acts like a window, through which you look at the landscape beyond, and places you outside the landscape, or the scene represented, whatever it be. It is not the shade or the shadow that is, in reality, deep or dark, so much as the *details* that are in it. Only look at your own shadow on the road, and see how light and blue it is. Thus then, while shadows are broad, even, aerial, and graduated in depth according to the distance from the eye,

## XLII.

Details are distinct ;

drawn firmly, and with a clear touch, once for all.

## XLIII.

Decided ;

each telling what it is. And in order to preserve harmony,

## XLIV.

Details are few.

The foregoing general remarks, then, are summed up in these three axioms :

Lights true,

Shadows broad, and

Details few.

We now come to a few particulars.

## TREES.

## XLV.

Every tree has a character of its own.

This depends on the growth, on the articulation and the direction of the branches, on the shape of the leaf, and on the masses of foliage.

If therefore, you wish to learn to draw trees as they are in Nature, and not stereotype or conventional objects, but *trees*, with all the life of their growth, and all the elegance of their outline,

## XLVI.

## Study the skeleton of trees,

in winter. One look will teach you that the oak and the ash, for instance, are not shaped alike: one displays manly vigour and boldness of form, the other droops and recoils; the one is son of the earth, the other only as an ornament to it.

In the skeleton of trees notice—1. The articulation of the branches with the trunk. They are neither mortised into the tree nor nailed to it; they live and grow out of the stem. Make that a study. 2. The direction, and the tortuosity of the branches, always with life and grace. Branches do not come one out of the other, like pegs; they *live* one from the other, and every one of their joints and of their bends shows that life. That, too, is matter for a long study; for the grace or truth of a tree depends as much, if not more, on the growth of its skeleton than on the masses made to hide it.

A want of attention to those particulars, and to the proportion which ought always to exist between the size of the trunk and the *weight* of the foliage it bears, often leads artists of talent to draw trees which cannot possibly stand under their

mass of branches and of leaves. You often see a slender stem with an enormous top, much more like a cauliflower than like a tree. But since we all have Nature before our eyes to copy, no sort of conventional style, no school, no age, no fancy can justify such deformity; for no amount of private or of public opinion can ever make that right which in itself is wrong. For, remember

## XLVII.

**Truth in drawing.**

In drawing, as in everything else, Truth is independent of opinion. It abides of itself.

After having studied the character of the trunk, and the winding of the branches, then

## XLVIII.

**Study the leaf.**

The shape of the leaf is characteristic of the tree, and of the way in which it hangs on the stalk. Since, unless we know the details we do not know the whole, no one can give a tree its own characteristic foliage who does not first understand the outline and economy of the leaf. If these details appear irksome, bear in mind that what is worth doing is worth doing well, and that

TRUTH is the soul of drawing. For drawing pleases only in proportion as it comes nearer to a true copy of the soul and spirit of Nature.

After the study of the leaf,

XLIX.

Study the foliage.

Masses are, of course, made up of leaves, and they borrow their character from them.

Compare, for instance, in the same group, the bearing, expression, and colour of the oak, of the birch, of the ash, of the walnut, of the willow, of the spruce-fir, and of the pine. Or, among trees of the same class, compare the foliage of the yew, of the cedar, of the fir, and of the pine; or that of the plane, of the sycamore, of the maple, etc. Every one of those trees differs from its neighbour; and one stereotype touch for each of those classes of trees would not represent them all.

But the study of trees is well worth the trouble it may give. If you understand and *feel* a tree, you will have little difficulty, and that difficulty will disappear in practice. But if, without feeling the wonderful elegance of every part of trees, you attempt to draw them, after Mr. So-and-so's style, and not after the style of the trees that stand



before you as your model, your task is hopeless, and your success impossible.

Trees are the ornament of Nature; they, of all objects worthy of imitation in drawing, are the most graceful, and the most faultless in outline. In drawing a tree, then,

L.

Mind the perspective,

*Linear*, of the branches, and of the foliage; let the touch be smaller and less distinct, though quite as characteristic, near the top of the tree than nearer the bottom of it.

*Aerial*: bear in mind that the tree is, more or less, round or spherical, and treat the general shadows accordingly, viz. no bright masses near the top, or on the sides, except under particular effects of light; and both the darkest shade and the brightest light on that part of the tree which is nearest your eye. Remember also, how the atmosphere plays around an object that is round, and let none of the masses on the edge be sharp and dark, as if they were cut out of paper. Even when a tree is seen with light from behind there is not one harsh line in it.

But these are hints only. If you understand

and feel the tree you cannot go wrong: your masses will grow distinct, and yet light and airy, under your hand; and the air that waves the feather-like branches of your model will inspire you to draw them as they are.

### BUILDINGS.

They are the opposite of trees in style of outline, as formal and as stiff as trees are elegant and graceful. Buildings, however, especially old buildings, from the very nature of their construction, present admirable effects of light and shade.

Even in buildings then

#### LI.

Let the outline be full of life.

If you find it necessary, in larger drawings especially, to use a ruler, let it be only to guide your hand, which must hide with firm and bold lines the formal traces of the rule.

#### LII.

Avoid sharp angles,

in all buildings, but especially in ruins, which are

the most picturesque; the angles of the walls, &c. are more or less broken and jagged, and afford bright bits of light, which sparkle as it were in the sun, and give life to the mass of stones which without them would look dead.

## LIII.

**Avoid bright uniform lights.**

There is not a wall, (unless it be plastered, and that is no study for any one fond of beauty,) that does not offer endless occupation for the brush or the pencil, in the manner in which the light falls edge-ways upon the angles, corners, or other anfractuositities of the stones. So that, even if the sun appears to pour its full light upon the side of the building, you cannot leave it quite white and smooth on the paper; but, with a light touch, or with a transparent tint, the brightest bits of light on the rough surface of the wall must all be brought out.

Good linear perspective is, of course, taken for granted. But aerial perspective is often neglected, therefore; bear in mind, that

## LIV.

The higher parts of the building are tinted, so as to bring the bottom of it nearer your eye, by casting the brightest light upon that. For the same reason also, the more distant part of a horizontal building must also be tinted, so as to throw the light on the part nearest you. In short, in buildings especially,—because of their formal outline,—the linear and the aerial perspective should agree together and be in strict keeping.

Next to the brightest lights we shall also find the darkest shadows; but the same depth of atmosphere which tends to subdue the light of a distant object, in like manner also, lends its blue colour to the distant shadow.

So that, in order to shade a square object according to Nature, we must tint slightly, in blue, the part of both the light and the shady sides that is furthest from the eye.

From a simple effect of refraction, we find also that

## LV.

The shadow cast by an object is darker than the shaded side of the object itself.

And also, from the same reason, that

## LVI.

The edge of a shadow is more blue than the centre thereof.

Perfectly brown or black shadows, therefore, are not natural, because they show no atmosphere. The difference of tint in this case is expressed in pencil drawing, by a lighter or a deeper shade; but under all circumstances the colour or

## LVII.

The depth of a shadow depends on the angle presented by the surface upon which the shadow falls.

## FIGURES.

These are all life; there is in them nothing angular or formal; and in drawing they may be considered in a two-fold point of view,—either as the main object, or as accessory only.

If a figure, or a group of figures, is the main object in the drawing, in either case they must be

## LVIII.

**Strictly anatomical.**

This is a study of itself; but no one can possibly paint or draw the human figure who has not studied, to some extent, both its bones and its muscles; for as in Nature these live, so also ought they to be living in the drawing.

Drawing from casts, which is often preferable to drawing from copies, can be no substitute for an anatomical knowledge of the figure. The cast gives no details, but only a dead outline of their aggregate form. Besides, few casts are as they should be, tinted; so that the shadows formed by purely white features upon the small surface of the cast, are, owing to the refraction, very often incorrect.

If, however, figures do not form the main object of the picture, but are only put in as accessory on a small scale,—in a landscape, for instance,—all that is required is, that they should be

## LIX.

**In proportion,**

as regards themselves, and as regards their position in the picture; and that they should be

## LX.

## Well drawn.

The same rules apply to cattle, and to other animals.

## FLOWERS.

These also constitute a special branch of drawing or painting, because some persons are more naturally captivated by the kind of beauty that belongs to flowers than by any other object of Nature. But they are not *easier* than the rest.

Where *real* talent for drawing exists, it must be applicable to any branch of it, whether to figures, to flowers, or to landscape. I do not mean that the same artist can excel equally in all; because *excellence* is not the result of natural gifts alone, but of practice also; and no one can devote sufficient time or attention to bring more than one branch of drawing to anything like excellence.

But I mean that, although flowers may appear easy, or at least easier than other objects in Nature, they nevertheless require just as much mind to understand, just as much soul to feel, and just as much talent to work out the pure and perfect outline of their form, and the delicacy of their tints,

as the human figure. They do not require such profound study of details, but, no one who does not feel the life of light and shade, and who does not hold intercourse, as it were, with the spirit he may fancy dwells in the flower, just as he would do with the spirit that lights up the countenance he studies, will ever draw flowers otherwise than flat and lifeless; more like their own shadow than like those

“ Sweet nurslings of the vernal skies,  
Bath'd in soft airs, and fed with dew :  
— relics of Eden's bowers ;  
As pure, as fragrant, and as fair  
As when they crown'd the sunshine hours  
Of happy wanderers there.”

Every rule of linear and of aerial perspective, every maxim in colouring, every precept in outline and in light and shade, applies to the drawing of flowers, quite as much, if not more, than it does to other objects; for they are the true school for elegance of shape, for freshness of tint, for beauty of outline, and for endless grace in attitude. Their bright colours often dazzle, but never clash; because they are not artificial but real, painted by Nature itself. Their slender and tangled stems and their waving forms may puzzle, but they never confuse; for in them every line is consistent with itself, since every line in them has a meaning.



All we have to do, then, is first to seize that meaning, and then to trace our outline, and to mix our colours, not after our own fashion, however, but after the perfect model we have.

### SKY.

The sky differs according to the time or kind of day. A cloudless sky requires practice, very wide brushes, plenty of water, little colour, a firm hand, and patience to wait until each successive tint is quite dry. A good sky may require from twelve to fifteen tints. A dark-blue, or Egyptian sky, must be *stippled* in cobalt with a very soft camels-hair, and not a sable, brush. A cloudy sky presents perhaps greater difficulties than a cloudless one; for few things show the artist's hand like clouds. It is easy to paint a sky white and blue, but extremely difficult to paint light, airy, and natural clouds, that float in the atmosphere, or that rest lightly on the hill side, from whence they rise in flakes as light as the air that bears them. Certain clouds are both easily and truthfully done with the finger covered with a soft linen cloth, with which the colour of the sky is quickly and lightly rubbed off while it is still moist; but this requires practice to insure complete success.

In drawings on tinted paper the clouds had better be done with very little white, lightly tinted with the colour of the paper, so as not to draw the eye from objects nearer at hand.

## MOUNTAINS.

Like everything else in Nature, every mountain has its own peculiar expression, because

### LXI.

Every mountain has distinct features,

as characteristic and as marked as those of the human face. Drawing a mountain is like taking the likeness of a friend; any other face would not serve as a substitute; so also one outline of hills, or of a hill, will not do for another.

And the rocks, and the snow of those hills, they will not bear to be drawn "by agreement among artists." They have each its own features. Study the aerial perspective of a hill or of a mountain, more and more subdued in tint and in light as it rises higher, until it seems to borrow from heaven itself the airy tints of its shadows. See how bold is the outline of those stupendous rocks that seem to support the blue vault of heaven, and how cha-

racteristic and fanciful in shape are the patches of snow that lies between them. That is Nature's picture : it must be copied, not invented. Likewise

## WATER,

whether running like a stream or torrent, or tranquil like a lake, must be studied on the spot.

A running mountain stream affords endless studies of light and of lights, in the fresh transparent water that sparkles in the sun, when falling over the edge of rocks, or playing in a maze of fitful wavelets in the eddy of the stream. We may study there till we fancy we can learn no more; and yet every glance of the eye over that running water discovers some new beauty unseen before. Because it is Nature; it must be studied; it cannot be thought or invented.

As to tranquil water, it is necessary to know the rules of perspective of the reflection of objects into the water. Those objects will be reflected in the water down to a certain angle of the surface with your eye, where the rays of light become refracted, and you begin to see the colour of the water itself. It is a difficult object to paint well,

and, like the rest, requires study, and an intimate acquaintance with the model, Nature, ere it can be done satisfactorily.

After all, we must end where we began. The sum of drawing is an imitation of Nature, according to our own conception and feeling of its beauties. If we have eyes that see well, but neither mind to understand, nor soul to feel what we see, we shall never be able to reproduce it on paper or on canvas. If, on the other hand, we can both see and appreciate what we behold, we have that without which it is impossible to draw. Let us try. The soul feels; the mind will find the way, and the hand will follow it; and by degrees it will trace, in harmony with the feeling that guides it, an image of NATURE, in which we learn to see HIM who made all things good, for our enjoyment and to His glory.

For the end of drawing is



LXII.

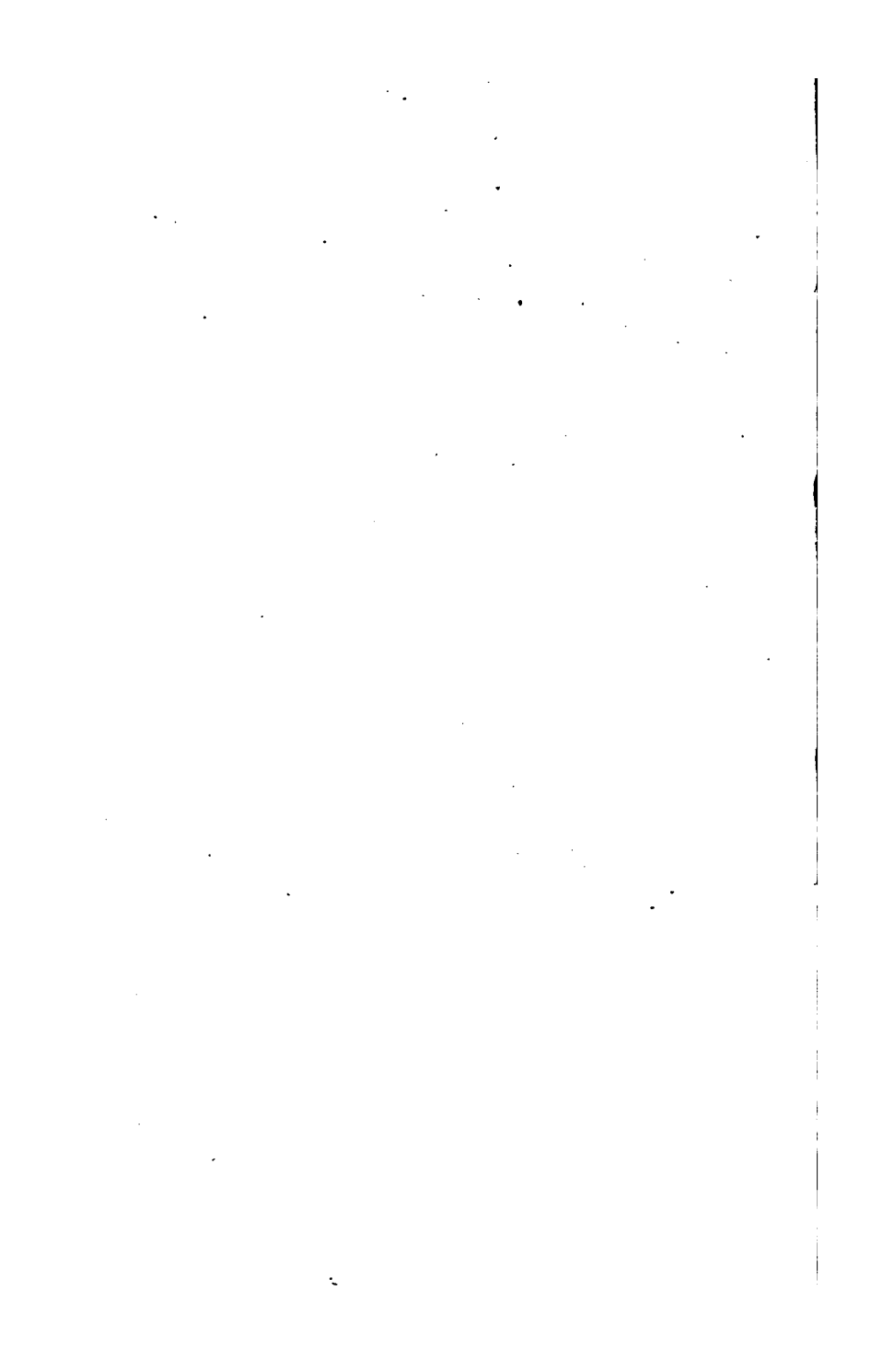
To praise HIM, in our work, who has given us eyes to see, and a soul to feel, the beauties of HIS own perfect works.

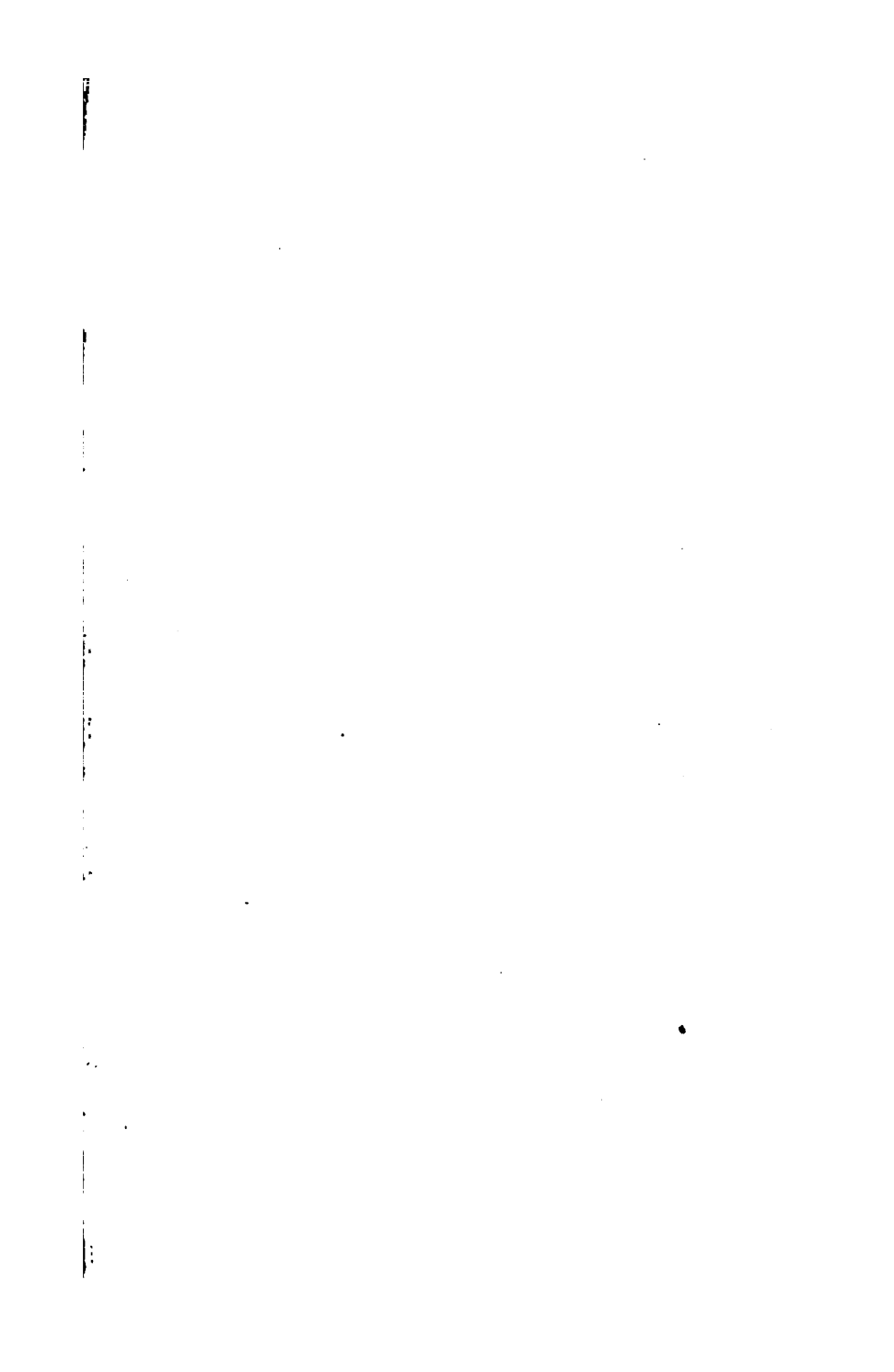
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AND LOVE THIS SIGHT SO FAIR,  
GIVE ME A HEART TO FIND OUT THEE,  
AND READ THEE EVERYWHERE.”

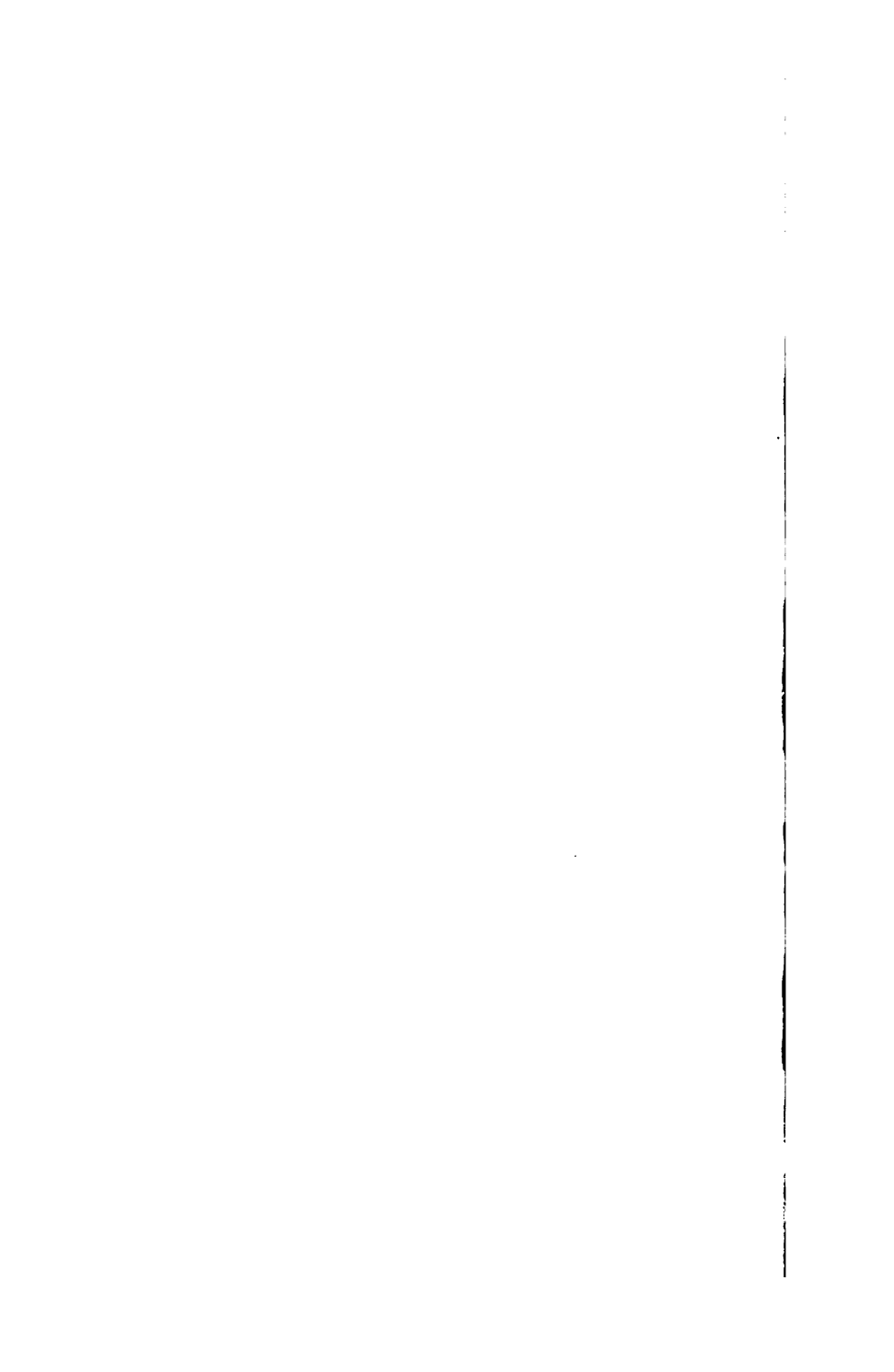
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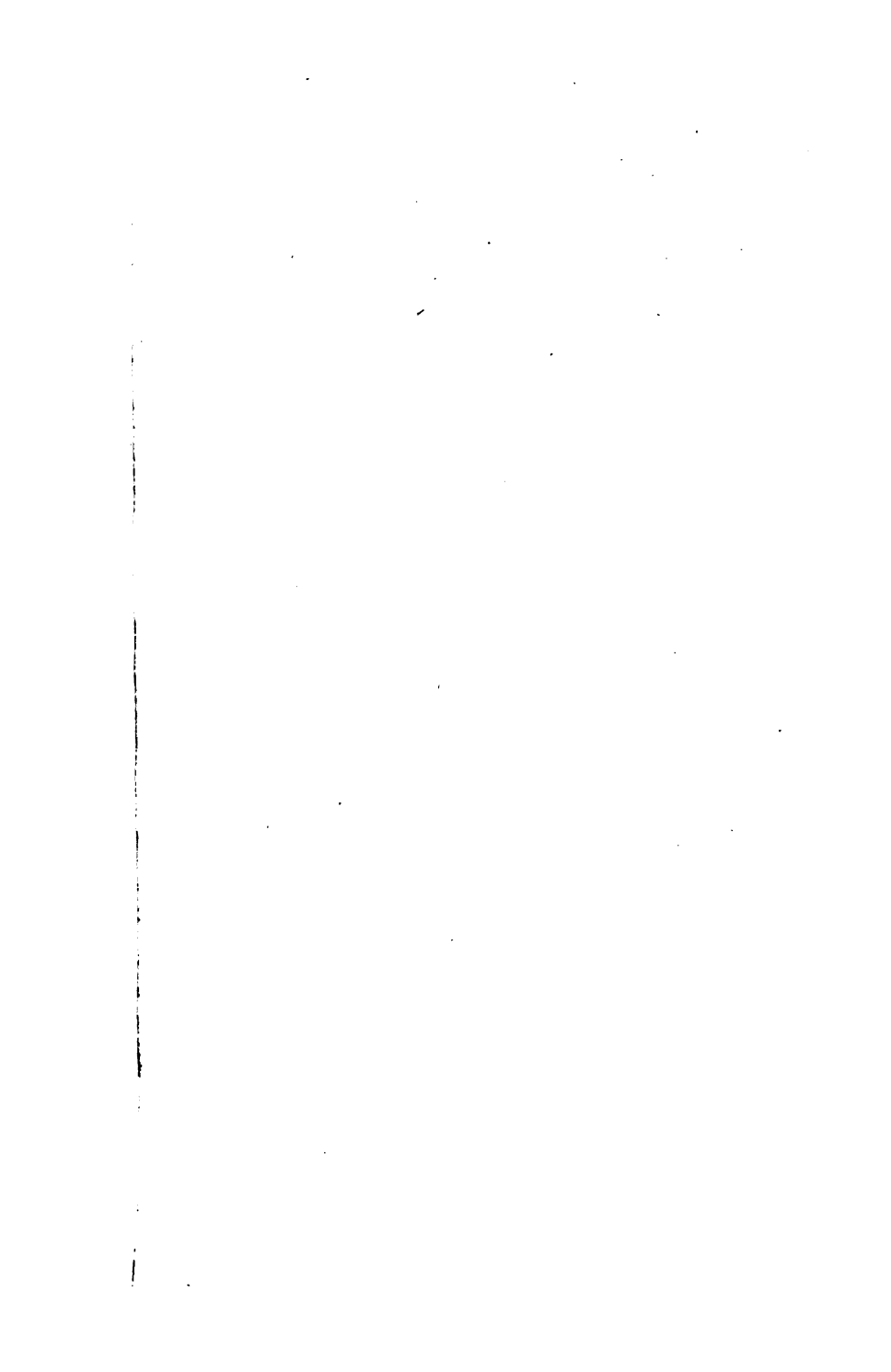
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