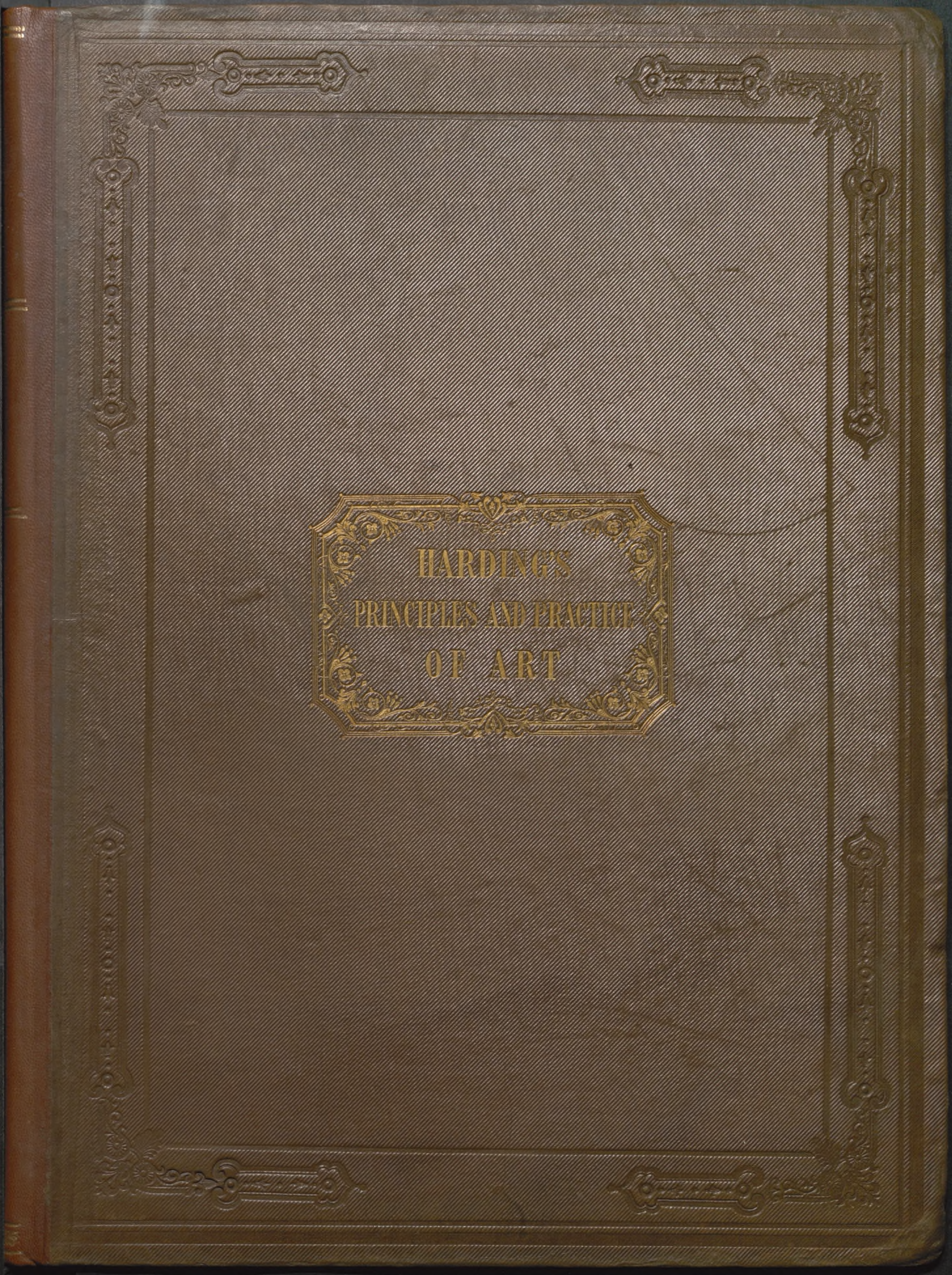

HARDING'S PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF ART

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PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

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PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

OF

ART.

BY

J. D. HARDING.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS DRAWN AND ENGRAVED BY THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

IN my Treatise on Elementary Art, which I intended as preparatory to the present work, I confined myself to the study of objects individually, and to their imitation by the simplest instruments of Art,—the lead pencil or chalk; and I endeavoured to direct the mind of the student to those principles and laws of Nature, which it is so necessary constantly to observe and supply. Whilst giving this instruction, which may be considered as the Alphabet of Art, I urged on the student the importance and superiority of that kind of imitation which is mental rather than mechanical,—which endeavours to express what the artist feels when viewing his subject as a whole, rather than to minutely copy that which he can only see when intently looking at a single part.

In the present work I have pursued the same course, from a conviction of its being at once the most simple, comprehensible, and useful; and in explaining the more recondite principles and more complicated practice of Art, I have constantly endeavoured to express my meaning in plain language, avoiding the use of technical terms, which, though current amongst artists, yet have even with them no definite value, but pass for what they are worth according to individual opinion.

In treating now of Imitation, with respect to the employment of composition, light-and-shade and colour, I have offered nothing which depends for its authority on myself, or on the practice of any school at any period. My object has been to explain truths which are ever-existent in Nature, to derive from them the principles of Art, and to show how those principles are to be carried into practice.

By the word "practice," I do not mean the mere manipulation of the brushes and colours; this is better learned in one day by seeing a painter at work, and receiving his *vivâ voce* instructions, than it could be taught in any book. All the methods of using the materials are simple enough when witnessed, but appear extremely complicated in a written description.

In the Elementary Treatise my object was to teach the Rudiments of Art: to explain its more recondite principles, to exemplify them graphically, and to instruct the student in their application, is the chief object of the present work. Although the selection of subjects depends on the predilections of the painter, yet the appropriate arrangement of the objects, the light-and-shade, and colour in a picture, may be suggested, if not strictly determined, by principles deduced from the study of Nature.

Throughout I have endeavoured to show, that, though pictorial Art is founded on imitation, yet to imitate mechanically by exact representation all the visible properties of objects is not only impossible, but, if it were possible, would be useless.

I have also endeavoured to show how the judgment and feelings, both separately and in combination, operate in the practice of Art. If I have succeeded in explaining myself, it will be apparent that no new faculty or sense is required to comprehend the principles upon which excellence and beauty in Art depend.

The remarks I have made on the works of some of the Old Masters may appear strange to those who have never heard their names mentioned but in connexion with the most extravagant terms of praise. I am not, however, one of those who think that the old masters, Dutch or Italian, are the exclusively excellent, nor that they have exhausted all that is beautiful and interesting both in Nature and Art; neither do I regret, while honouring the talents of the really great among them, that we have no modern painters to rival them in the departments in which they have deservedly won distinction, and, from the right of pre-occupancy, made to a certain extent their own. Of their works there is no deficiency; and for the purposes of study we have more than enough, even if great painters could only be formed by studying and copying the works of their predecessors. But, in order to attain a high degree of excellence, something more than such a study is required. Nature puts in her claim to our attention: she is the great source of knowledge and feeling, and whoever neglects to seek inspiration at this source will never become a great artist.

Changes in manners and customs, as well as in the tastes, feelings, and opinions of society, have in more recent times given a new impulse to talent, and stimulated its exercise in other directions, and on other subjects, than those generally followed and chosen by the old masters.

Should it be objected, that the present work treats too much on Landscape, I would reply, that general principles are applicable in every department of Art; and that, if their application is not here so much exhibited in Historical Subjects as in Landscape, it is because I am not both an historical and landscape painter.

J. D. H.

London, 4, Gordon Square,
3rd June, 1845.

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ERRATA.

Page 62, line 9 from the top, *for* "bad," *read* "common-place."
,, 63, ,, 24 ,, *for* "Example 2," *read* "Example 3."
,, 119, in the Diagram, *for* "black," *read* "grey."

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

THE Note at the foot of Page 9 was written when I intended to give all the Illustrations in Lithotint; but I afterwards adopted Engraving, as it more fully exemplifies my meaning.

ON

THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

OF

ART.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY: TRUE PRINCIPLES OF ART FOUNDED IN NATURE.—OBSTACLES TO A KNOWLEDGE OF ART.

TO the true perception of Nature and the just appreciation of Art, there must be an eye to see, intellect to distinguish, and feelings to stimulate and encourage their efforts. All these faculties, whatever be their natural degree of power, may be improved by instruction, which, to be valuable or worthy of the name, must be founded on truth. Truth, whether in Art or Science, must ever be the standard to which all opinions and judgments must ultimately be referred: no one endowed with reason will venture to deny, or to reject, laws perfect and demonstrable; nor be unwilling to acknowledge their immeasurable superiority over unfounded speculations and conventionalities.

It has been too much the practice of those who have written on Art to refer perpetually to the productions of the Old Masters, instead of referring to Nature as the only sure guide; and thus, instead of her constant and invariable laws, we are presented with the writer's opinions, often capriciously deduced from the occasional practice of the "Old Masters;" while for that which is truly admirable in the works of such masters, they usually fail in giving the only sound reason that can be assigned,—namely, that it is in accordance with a law of Nature regulating and determining her imitation by the means of Art.

In place of this, we are presented with a poor substitute—the authority of the Old Masters; for many of their works present exceptions to the rule sought to be established, and afford proofs that such rule,—which is to be a guide to us,—was no rule to themselves, but rather an accidental adaptation suggested by the nature of the particular subject. We are thus constantly called upon to submit rather to their conventions, and their mannerisms, than to their powerful displays of truth; and errors are thus perpetuated which sound instruction should have taught us to avoid. By a proper study of Nature, however, with reference to Art, we may at length attain to a perception of truth, and learn to distinguish between an artist's occasional expedients and an invariable principle of universal applicability, and so become able to appreciate whatever is truly excellent—to distinguish the occasional glitter of the dross from the permanent lustre of the pure ore.

Works professing to give instruction in the principles of Art, sometimes present little more than a brief history of the Painters, where, and under whom they studied; accompanied with a catalogue of their works, and with criticisms on them; such, for instance, as that a light has been "carried into" the dark, and *vice versâ;* that the red on one side of the picture has been "carried into" the green on the opposite side; some yellow "carried off" by the pattern of a dress, &c. &c. Observations such as these are not of practical utility; they merely point to the occasional expedients of the Painter, appropriate to, and beginning and ending with, the particular picture spoken of; and very often the ingenious descanter on other men's merits finds beauties, and instances of "skilful contrasts" and "balancings," which the Painter himself never imagined. But if Nature's laws, to which those and other expedients should be subservient, and on which they ought to be based, were pointed out, we could then view such expedients as evidence, not only of the power of the Painter, but whence he had derived it.

To point to such devices, however ingenious, as the authorities for a principle, instead of referring to them as instances of its application, is to set up a less perfect standard than Nature; while to direct the student to her unchanging laws is to point to perfection: with a knowledge of these, he will be enabled to see how far others have succeeded, and to profit by their experience and practice.

I do not propose to reason on Art metaphysically and abstractly, but to explain its principles, as far as I am able, practically and *sensibly,*—that is, by appealing to truths which are perceived to be self-evident the moment that attention is directed towards them. If there be in Art anything worthy the name of science, it must be based on permanent laws, and regulated by them. My object, therefore, is to inquire what those laws are, what are their effects, and to demonstrate them by illustrative examples, as a mode of advancing Art, and of promoting a love of it.

"Notwithstanding the wide diffusion of the best works," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "the knowledge of Art has not progressed in an equal ratio. Many, very many persons, still continue to imagine that it consists in certain secrets they can purchase, and soon put into practice." Many look on works of Art as on beautiful pieces of furniture, and are as indifferent to the talent of the artist as they are to the handiwork of the upholsterer, or cabinet-maker, and make no distinction in ranking the work of Art or the piece of furniture: of the two, perhaps, they prefer the latter, from its more obvious utility in contributing to their personal comfort and ease.

The perpetual necessity, from the first moment that the pen has dealt with Art, of pointing to some model for evidence, and for imitation, and the desire to avoid saying anything invidious of living artists, appear to have been the primary motives for appealing to the works of the Old Masters:—no interest could be injured, no feelings wounded. These circumstances have, I am convinced, contributed to establish a factitious fame, which is, in many instances, at variance with real merit, and has prevented thousands from thinking for themselves, and still more from expressing any unfavourable opinion of what has been assumed to be beyond dispute or criticism, and been set forth as the standard of excellence.

Though there can be no doubt that the Old Masters have left to posterity a rich inheritance in Art, yet their works, whether produced at the early or later part of their career, are not all equally valuable, nor all equally near perfection; and again, they were but the productions of men like ourselves; and amongst excellences to be imitated and emulated, there are faults to be avoided. Instead of inculcating an unreasonable deference to names—an indiscriminate admiration, without the free exercise of judgment—how much more must the real knowledge of Art be promoted by dispersing the mist of prejudice that obscures the student's vision, and by letting in the light of truth, which not only discovers to him defects, but also renders him more capable of perceiving and appreciating beauties? Aided by this light, he will be more heedful of adopting the errors of others while admiring their merits, and less liable to commit mistakes of his own.

To this it may, perhaps, be answered, that Sir Joshua Reynolds has said, "that all should be taken on trust." Now this appears to me to be quite erroneous; for, if the student have presented for his contemplation beauties or merits which he does not comprehend, he can set no real value on them, precisely because he neither knows nor feels what they are. Shortly after, however, Sir Joshua says, "that taste and genius operate in proportion to our attention in observing the works of Nature—to our skill in selecting and to our care in digesting, methodising, and comparing our observations."

That Art deserves to be more generally understood and appreciated, few will deny. Those who are really indifferent to it, or lightly esteem it, forget, or perhaps have never been aware, how much of the valuable information they possess is due to the instrumentality of Art,—how much of it is mixed up with many of the sciences, how much it contributes daily to the luxury of ornament, to the embellishment of utility, and to national wealth. It is man's constant attendant in a highly civilised state, and powerfully assists to raise him to it. Even in a savage state, he begins to apply his imagination to decorate his person; and in a high state of civilisation, whatever he requires for his use or ornament is impressed with the character of Art, either in form or in colour. He requires its presence, because he knows and feels its influence; and the degree of the presence of Art, according to his means, will generally mark the susceptibility of its possessor to impressions of beauty, as its selection and association will mark his taste, judgment, and refinement. Whether in-doors or out, he is continually surrounded, affected, and influenced by it; it becomes in a manner necessary to his pleasurable existence; and he feels the want when it is no longer presented to his eye.

There are, comparatively, few persons who have any competent knowledge of Art, or who think such knowledge necessary, or worthy of attainment. Prince Hoare, in his Enquiry, says, "That even scholars, of the profoundest erudition in letters, are very commonly little better informed of the properties of Art than the merest school-boy at an academy." This, I am inclined to think, proceeds rather from the difficulty of obtaining clear and intelligible information than from any positive indifference. Men of learning would willingly add to their store of acquirements knowledge on this, as well as on any other interesting subject; but many, no doubt, are prevented from seeking it, under the idea, that either they can never be made to understand the principles of Art unless they practise it, or that there is no certain knowledge to be acquired on the subject,—little to be learned beyond the mere technicalities of practice, and that if there be any science, it is too vague and unconnected to be worth the trouble of acquiring.

Amongst the quantity which has been written on Art, much is really excellent, but often mixed up with much that is too indefinite to lift the aspiring and talented student fairly over the difficulties of his early steps, and launch him on his future practice with safety; and also much is there that is obscure, unsatisfactory, and discouraging, to those in whom a natural love of Art has been implanted, and whom fortune has favoured with leisure to practise and encourage it; and thus many are led to look upon the acquisition as hopeless, and the encouragement of it hazardous.

To remove the obscurity and ambiguity to which I allude, and to make myself understood, as to the object I have in view in this work, I must quote some passages from Sir J. Reynolds himself, whose contributions, invaluable and justly esteemed as they are, are yet not without some unfounded opinions and unproved assertions, tending rather to embarrass than to enlighten the artist and the amateur, either practically or theoretically. I should perhaps have shrunk from a task which, even in his able hands, was sufficiently difficult, were it not from the encouragement and apology contained in the following sentence:—"The knowledge," says Sir Joshua, "which an artist has of his subject, will more than compensate for any want of elegance in the mode of treating it, or even perspicuity, which is more essential; and I am convinced that one short essay, written by a Painter, will contribute to advance the theory and practice of Art more than a thousand volumes, such as we sometimes see, the purpose of which seems rather to display the refinement of their authors' own conceptions of impossible practice, than to convey useful knowledge or instruction of any kind whatever."

An artist, who knows what is, and what is not, within the province of Art to perform, is not likely to be ever mystifying the poor student with the "grand conceptions of Michael Angelo,"—the "divine poetry of Raphael,"—the "majesty of Titian's colouring," —or the "depth of Carravagio's pencil;" and perplexing him with terms which convey no precise meaning, or with an imaginary union of excellences incompatible with each other.

CHAPTER II.

ON IMITATION AS APPLIED TO ART.

THE first step in Art is to imitate; and, therefore, the first inquiry respecting Art, must be,—What is meant by Imitation, and in what degree is it required?

There are two kinds of imitation; one of which strives to approach the likeness of the object by a direct fac-simile copy so as to persuade that the "mimic show" is scarcely fiction. But as all pictorial imitation is made with materials remotely differing from the object imitated, perfect likeness is impossible. Such imitation is also as unphilosophical as it is impracticable.

The other kind of imitation is that which, giving up identity, aims, through the perfect form of the object, or whatever is the perfection of its kind, to give it the appearance of possessing those qualities and properties of which the mind is cognizant, and from which we derive our sensations and emotions.

The difficulty of imitation is in giving the appearance of reality. This can only be done by studying the application of the powers and materials of Art, in conformity with the laws of Nature, so that the impressions we receive and learn from her, as our model, may be transmitted by imitating the outward characteristic of her objects. Now, as imitation is the true source of Art, it is necessary to study what degree of it is requisite to reach the true end of Art,—namely, to improve the mind, and ennoble the feelings.

Those who are neither acquainted with, nor study the true end and aim of Art, labour only to please the external sense, and misemploy their time in the fruitless endeavour to produce a perfect resemblance, which at best only gratifies the uneducated eye, whilst it reminds the intelligent spectator more forcibly of the artist's pains than of the object imitated. In such attempts, the means employed are most conspicuously evident; for the mind not being reached, no ideas associated with the object represented are suggested; and thus the attention becomes more concentrated on the efforts of abortive Art.

Precisely, then, as the eye finds less to attract or engage its attention in the means themselves, or in their employment on identical imitation, so the mind receives more vivid impressions, and is, therefore, so captivated by the engrossing and active effect of Art on the imagination, as to be insensible to the want of perfection in the means, or in the imitation.

The means of Art, of whatever kind they may be, are poor and inadequate to represent completely the simplest natural object; and however the patient hand and correct eye may labour—whatever may be done—we are still conscious, in beholding the results, that we are looking at Art, and not at Nature. This inadequacy of the means, and our certain conviction that they are, after all, employed by artifice, make the energetic exercise of mind still more imperative on the artist, in order to overcome the manifest contradictions which exist between the imitation and the object, so as to produce on the mind of the spectator effective and vivid impressions,—to suggest forcibly the idea of the thing signified, without rendering the imperfections of the representation obtrusive.

Individuality, or identical imitation, is not only absolutely impossible, but is not required; for, otherwise, to perfect the charms of Sculpture or Painting, we must add colour to the one and rotundity to the other. Were identical imitation all-important, we could not stop short of any of the attributes of reality.

On this topic I beg to quote the following pertinent remarks from Mons. Quatremère de Quincy's Essay "On Imitation in the Fine Arts":—"Do we remark that there is matter in the masterpieces of Sculpture? Do we wish for the addition of colour? or the step nearer to verisimilitude which it might bring? Do we in paintings regret that their beautiful scenes are presented to us only on one side, or that their figures are motionless? What then would we have? Are shrieks wanting to the torments of the Laocoön, or the accents of lamentation to the anguish of Niobe?

"It will hold good, as a general remark, that, according as the imagination is more active, we possess in a higher degree the necessary capability of supplying the kind of deficit common to every work of Art; and the better also are we contented with the specific illusion. In fact, the pleasure of illusion arises, more than we allow for, from a sort of working of the mind by which itself finishes the work of Art.

" In imitation which is limited to the senses, in the choice of its subjects, and its mode of representing them, it may fairly be asked what its images can teach me, restricted as they are to the gratification of the eye? What do they show me more than I already know? What do they put me in a condition to perceive over and above their model? What impressions depending on Art do they communicate? What new acquisition can such imitation promise me, or give me reason to hope for? It does not carry my imagination beyond the confines of reality.

" I shall be told that it gives me what Nature, whose portraiture it is, gives me. I answer—No. It does not give it, precisely because it is only a portrait, and because a portrait is only a part of the resemblance of the natural object, and presents only a single aspect. Wherefore should I wish for a copy? What need have I of the appearance of things whose reality I am indifferent to? What worth can I attach to the image, when I hold its model in contempt? More especially, since there is nothing beyond to compensate for the absence of all those properties which Nature denies it."

In each of the Examples given in PLATE I., different means have been employed on the same subject, though with a different treatment; Example 1 is etched on steel; Example 2 is produced from stone, by lithotint, with the addition of chalk[*]. A mere glance at these will show, irrespective of any change in the features of the subject, that even the materials of Art have various advantages, and that some may be more favourable than others, or, in other words, less objectionable; for, although, looking at these examples, we find that neither is like Nature, and that both are conventional in their means of representation, yet, when we observe that in one the various objects, all of them differing in their very nature,—stems and branches, water, grass, ground, and rushes,—are all represented by scratches and lines in all conceivable directions, we instantly perceive in this fact a startling dissimilarity to Nature; and, notwithstanding we may feel a certain amount of likeness to Nature, inasmuch as we understand

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[*] Lithotint is a recent and very beautiful invention of Mr. Hullmandel's, enabling the artist to produce his drawing on stone with a brush, which is a more effective instrument than the chalk or pencil.

Pl.I.

Ex:1

Ex:2

what the various objects are, yet, whatever may be the amount of that likeness, we are offended by the evident and inseparable dissimilarity in the means themselves. We can trace and almost count every line, which, apart from the forms they represent, we know to be a direct libel on Nature; and we feel, although perhaps unconsciously, that this very evidence of the means detracts materially from any pleasure we might otherwise derive, there being a perpetual contest between the means and the end. These objections are not to be found in like degree in the other example; and, by comparing the two, something like a correct idea may be formed of the difference which exists in the materials; though all, indeed, are unnatural, yet all are not equally so,—none serve for every purpose. Whilst Lithotint has many advantages, yet there are advantages belonging to etching, not possessed by Lithotint*; painting in oil and in water-colours equally differ; but I defer the notice of these matters to future pages; for, the more important idea which at this moment I am anxious to impress on the reader's mind, is the distinction between identical and mental imitation.

Identical imitation, obtained by the use of any kind of materials or instruments, guided in their application chiefly if not entirely by the sight, and aiming exclusively at fac-simile likeness, is cognisable by the eye only in the particular object; whilst a mental imitation, deriving assistance not only from the sight, but from the judgment in the choice of the means, and in their adaptation to the end, aims only at so much of the likeness as shall impress the mind with a conviction of its truthfulness, undiminished by any obtrusive evidence of the artist's efforts, or of the means employed. Identical imitation copies with precise accuracy every stripe on the skin of the tiger: mental imitation, whilst representing the form no less accurately, and the various stripes no less satisfactorily, suggests at the same time, to the mind of the spectator, an idea of the animal's characteristic temperament, power, and action.

In Example 1 an effort has been made to copy the forms of Nature, without previous consideration whether they were good or bad,—regardless of any beauty,

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* As a proof of this, it will be found that I have availed myself of the advantages it offers to unite it with Lithotint, as some of the later examples of this work will show. After many trials with Lithotint, with various success, this thought occurred to me, and I have found it extremely successful in giving brightness, firmness, and character.

separately or in combination, or such as would convey to the mind agreeable impressions from the entire subject; and, as in this latter and most important respect it fails, we are compelled to fall back on the objects singly. Examining them separately, we cannot avoid noticing among them the similarity of some to others,—such as the size, height, and shape of the stems of the nearest trees,—that in fact they are twins, and so also are the equally upright posts of the gateway; we remark also the repetition of palings—objects insignificant in themselves—and of the rushes, which, by a little patience, we might count; and also the grotesque form of the trunk of the oak on the left, and its yet more grotesque branches, very much resembling black snakes in agonies; together with the boat, which appears to be sticking into the stem, much like a knife in a block, although, compared in its size with the tree, we are sure it should appear much farther off. Both, however, were probably delineated with equal attention to individual likeness, as were the rest of the features of the scene, none of which are remarkable for their beauty of form, nor is there anything much more striking in their association,—scarcely as much as would arrest more than a glance. In Example 2 we have the same *kind* of features, though of more pleasing or more noble form,—the trees rounder, more flexible, and better examples of their kind, —but all arranged in like order. We have the water, but more lucid,—its margin fringed with rushes and entangled bushes, amongst which the water steals; the trunk on the left drooping under accumulated years, but with some of its boughs still vigorous—their forms tortuous, as is their nature in the oak, and proceeding from all sides of the gnarled trunk; and the figure in the boat, whose size and distinctness are not at variance with the place assigned to him in the foreground. Example 1 is an attempt at a faithful portrait of the scene, and of every feature. Example 2 is a likeness of the scene only, inasmuch as it presents the same kind of objects in the same juxtaposition and relation to each other, so that we recognise in both examples virtually the *same* scene; but in the amount and nature of their individual resemblance, a comparison will show that they differ widely;—for in Example 1 we have objects by no means so striking or so rare as to make us covet their exact resemblance, or whose forms could make any impression on our memories. Looking, then, not to identical imitation, but rather to their collocation and the consequent impression they leave on our minds; to the pleasant trees; the peep at the distance through them; to the quiet and gliding stream, whose sparkling eddies show that many a goodly fish is to be had from among the entanglements of its rushy margin: these are the features we most powerfully remember, by their sensible impression on our feelings; and, taking these circumstances, we find them enforced in Example 2 with more power, because, abandoning the actual imitation, from a thorough conviction that such a thing is unattainable, we prefer to bring home to the feelings the well-remembered sentiments or suggested thoughts, by their expression in more lofty and nobler features. Then, because direct imitation is impossible, the latter kind of imitation must be the best, because it reaches the feelings, and there is no evidence of that false taste, or want of taste, which chooses for pictorial representation, things, which, however like Nature, are not from among her choice productions, and hardly escape her deformities. Nature, and especially in our own country, abounds with such scenes as are represented in these Examples, so nearly alike, that no memory could retain the nice shades of peculiarity which distinguish one from another; and where the similarity is so general, and the beauty so nearly equal, individual portraiture is less required, and should be less sought; for even if it were attained, it could only in that respect afford gratification to a few. Taking, then, what I have here given as an instance of the likeness of any such scene, and where every one among the ten thousand possesses the same general type, I may fearlessly ask of the most ignorant in Art, which of the two pictures brings home such a scene and its associations to their minds with the most power?

If we consider the beauty of forms singly or in combination, their aspects under different lights and shades, colour, character, and expression, over which Art has ample control, we are warranted in saying that its field is infinite. The pleasure of the eye must indeed accompany the imitation; but, as De Quincy justly observes, "less as an end than as a means to the accomplishment of higher designs."

Love of individuality, and the consequent mistake of addressing the eye only, have misled many artists, of every period, who, having a natural talent for mere imitation,—and believing in that, and little more than that, as the sum and substance of Art, and regardless, or more probably ignorant of any advantages to be derived from the selection of objects for imitation,—have brought before us repulsive defects, and deformities in conjunction with beauties, and have even gained admirers for a gross fac-simile of men and things, not only destitute of every characteristic of beauty, but often revolting. I allude to some of the Dutch Painters.

Those magical works of the Italian School, and many of our own country and time, in which there is only so much of individual imitation as may convey to the mind a distinct idea of the objects imitated, create in us the most agreeable or the most intense sensations and emotions. The success of such works in affecting the mind, is the strongest evidence of talent directed to its highest purposes, teaching by great or beautiful examples, and pleasing while it instructs.

The materials of Art are often misapplied, and the artist's time is too frequently misspent in attracting attention to minute and valueless imitation, while the richer appliances of contrasts in form, kind, magnitude, and colour, are often lost sight of altogether.

The instruments of design are of course mechanical; and, like other instruments, there is a right and a wrong method of using them; they are effectively employed in proportion as we are acquainted with their nature and properties, and with the influence of light and shade, form and colour, on our minds, both separately and in combination. In short, the proper application of the means of Art depends on a knowledge of truth, and how to represent it.

If in a picture, incorrectness of drawing, or the artist's want of knowledge be perceived, the mind will not, indeed cannot, fully receive the impression sought to be conveyed, because it is primarily offended with the evidences of incapacity or ignorance: instead of being agreeably deluded into a contemplation of the subject represented, it is in a manner forced to dwell on the defects of the representation. Much of the effect of a subject, however ably treated in other respects, must necessarily be lost, if the eye at the first glance becomes aware of incorrectness in what may be called the painter's *ocular language*. The eye must therefore be satisfied; for if the objects pretend to be what they either incorrectly, or insufficiently, express, the offence thus given to the eye is distraction to the mind.

It is in the highest degree necessary that the artist should know what really is within his reach, in order that he may fruitfully employ his talents, and not vainly strive for the attainment of impossibilities in useless details of every kind.

The true end of Art being lost sight of, his powers become contracted and limited by his very efforts to rival Nature by identical imitation. All the witcheries of Art, and their influence on the mind, are exchanged for the indulgence of the sense of sight only. The mind which has been cultivated by Art can alone judge truly of Nature's beauties, pictorially considered: so many things provoke admiration, far, very far, beyond the reach of the pencil, even when guided by the utmost skill, that if we sought their direct representation we should be perpetually disappointed.

Where gratification is offered to the eye only, the mind remains inactive, and cannot experience enjoyment. There must be a comparison of one object with another in their forms, characters, and colours; and though there can be no actual expression of hard or soft, smooth or rough, yet a satisfactory indication of those qualities may be conveyed to the mind by means within the reach of Art. If this be accomplished, imagination, stimulated by the truthlike character of the generalities, supplies that which is wanting in the details, and requires no aid beyond what is necessary to give activity to the mind. We thus trace the course of the artist's ideas, enter into the merits of his work, and enjoy it to the fullest extent, without regarding the technical means, which are too often allowed to divide the attention.

Artists who are truly great, are so, in the expression of various sentiments appropriate to their subject, according to the strength and variety of their own feelings, regulated by their judgment. Such do not fail to find general admiration, and some in particular, are admired even to enthusiasm, where they have succeeded in powerfully exciting feelings in unison with their own.

There is no face, however beautiful, in the living subject, which does not appear much less so, if not positively repulsive, when we view a cast of it from a mask; the identity of the features is undeniable, and yet we fail to see in such a fac-simile anything but a life-in-death caricature.

Though it would be beyond the reach of Art to be more strictly exact, neither painter nor sculptor would care to make such an imitation of Nature. It is also no less certain that, wanting the interest which life imparts to the most ordinary features, as well as the varying hues of colour and expression, the artist is imperatively called upon to supply his deficiencies by increasing the specific beauties of the form before him, which his true observation, careful study, and unerring skill enable him to depict, and thus to furnish a substitute for those perfections which challenge him to unequal combat.

That identical imitation is not required, is sufficiently proved by the varied manner in which Nature is viewed and represented by different painters. Each finds his admirer; and why? Because the painter, stamping his own feelings and sentiments on his work, finds them responded to by those of the spectator, according to the strength and harmony of their mutual knowledge and feeling; but perhaps the most striking evidence of this is to be found in the fact that we admire works of Art, whatever be the materials employed; for, if we are touched by the truth which they can adequately express, we exclaim, "How like Nature!" and hardly ask for more. If we view a work of Art executed by more powerful materials, short of colour, we are equally captivated with the truth, if forcibly expressed, and find ourselves riveted to the contemplation of what we still call "Nature;" although the actual resemblance falls infinitely short of the degree of likeness which is attainable by means of colour. Now if nothing but actual likeness, in every respect, would satisfy, no imitation without the addition of colour would be tolerable. But so far from this being the case, we find our admiration excited by various means which bring an amount of likeness far removed from any which is dependent on colour.

It is quite evident that the spectator is, or ought to be, excited by some sympathy existing between himself and the painter, and thus impelled to trace such impressions and images as are in unison with his own feelings and ideas. Although pleasure is the object sought, the pleasure imparted must vary according to the faculty of the individual seeking to receive it, or according to the power in the painter to awaken emotions. The spectator must be mentally an active participator in the work which he views; and his imagination, if he be intelligent, will be on the alert to realise the pictured objects, if they be sufficiently suggested to him; for as the pictures of the poet require to be embodied by the imagination, so painting, to be *poetic—working* on the mind—depends on its power to give, in a like manner, activity to the imagination.

As by far the greatest number of persons, however, who look at all to Art, expect to derive enjoyment for the senses, having no other criterion, it is therefore so much the more necessary, for the sake of the Art, to cultivate an intellectual view of it, to secure it from degradation if not extinction.

We have seen that there are two kinds of imitation: that which affects the eye only, and that which reaches the mind through the medium of the eye. "Since it is acknowledged," as De Quincy says, "that each of these two modes of imitation has its particular amount of pleasure; and since we are compelled to admit that the pleasure increases or diminishes, in every work of Art, according to the greater or less distance of the model from the process by which it is imitated,—the elements of reality from those of the image, and the effects produced from the means or instruments by which it was produced; it is necessary that, in every form of composition, the pleasure of the judgment, and the understanding, should be alike considered with that of the senses."

Imitation thus conducted secures all that is worthy of attainment or within its proper range, and renders the sphere of its operations more exalted and more intellectual, since its aim is not merely to affect the senses, but to produce a moral influence through a mental effect. In proportion as Art beautifies the mind, and refines the feelings, so must it be valued, not only for its own sake, but also for its tendency to give a disrelish for pursuits which afford gratification of a lower kind.

It has already been shown, that to aim at identity is fruitless, nay, absurd.— It now remains to show also, that it is powerless on the mind.

The eye is too delicate an organ to endure a sustained effort. It cannot *labour* without pain. The eye, therefore, never can regard an assemblage of objects, more especially such as are presented in a natural landscape, long enough to perceive *all* their details, so as to recognise them again, even if they could be pictorially represented. Even of scenes whose natural features are most strikingly marked and familiar, the mind retains but a general idea; and when an attempt is made to represent them from memory, unaided by sketches made on the spot, we become perfectly conscious how little of the details is distinctly remembered. Can it then be necessary to set before the eye that which it has never perceived? before the mind, that which in reality it knows not?

Let us take for illustration some scene which is most likely to be generally known; for instance, London from the Observatory-Hill in Greenwich Park. Those features which first strike us, and fix themselves on the memory, are the domes of the Hospital, and the noble pile of building, united with that of the Naval Schools and Asylum; these are backed by the Limehouse Marshes and the river Thames, on whose surface float the various kinds of shipping; and, following its windings towards the metropolis, we recognise the principal features on each side of it within our view,—above all, the spires of the churches,—until the eye falls on the majestic form of St. Paul's Cathedral towering over all, and the scarcely less imposing mass of Westminster Abbey, with the Highgate and Hampstead Hills in the background. In the foreground, and immediately at our feet, we have the noble Elms and the beautiful and remarkable specimens of the Scotch Fir, in the Park.

To identify this scene, both the eye and the mind require, in those more remarkable features, something more approaching exact resemblance, than in the multitude of others much less conspicuous; because the former are impressed on the memory: but these, however necessary, would make but a very unsatisfactory representation of the whole scene, if unassociated with those sensations and ideas excited on beholding the reality,—a mass of buildings of all shapes, sizes, and kinds, here appearing less closely compacted, there more densely wedged together, and covering a vast area of many miles in circumference,—the home and shelter of hundreds of thousands of human beings, whose unceasing activity is manifested by the dense volumes of smoke issuing from the thick forest of chimneys, and in greater or lesser density enveloping the whole scene, and more or less obscuring every feature; nor less in the incessant passing to and fro on the river of vessels of every kind and nation,—ships, steam-packets, barges and boats,—from the giant Indiaman to the light and trim-built wherry. All is throbbing with the pulse of life. Whilst under the shade of the tall trees of the Park are to be seen here and there the veteran sailors from the Hospital, pleasantly loitering away in vacuity of thought the remnant of their years; or, scattered in various groups, are children gamboling on the lawns, or the citizen and artisan, escaped for a few hours from the confusion of noise and the drudgery of toil, are stealing, in a parenthesis, a little quiet, a few beams of sunshine, or a few inspirations of the healthful breeze. Should we not, in this case, with something for the eye, require much more for the mind —that which is more difficult and more worthy of attainment?

Should we not, in figures, experience in a like manner incomparably more delight in tracing the passions of the mind,—in seeing the figure as if warm with life, full of animation and expression, with the drapery loose, free, and ready to adapt itself to every change of position? Could any precise portraiture of the features, or the furrows of the face, or the pores of the skin,—the number and exact form of the folds of the drapery, or of any pattern on it, ever compensate for or add to those higher qualities which sensibly and agreeably affect the mind? Direct imitation is not only unnecessary, but every effort to obtain it is positively offensive; for how can Art, in its mimic imitation, successfully vie with Nature? Could anything be more futile and absurd than the attempt? An attention to the proper aim and limits of Art, at once convinces us of this,—and so much the more forcibly, when we consider that it is not within the reach of Art to give an identical imitation of any one object, and less still of all which constitute a landscape. Can all the leaves of trees, and all the branches, in form and variety, be given? Impossible.—All the blades of grass and all the herbage? Impossible.—All the endless forms of water in motion? Impossible. All the buildings constituting the city, and all the windows and doors in them? Impossible.—Is there any one thing, a constituent, properly so called, of a landscape, which can be imitated *tale quale?* There is not:—"Impossible" is written in distinct characters over all.

What then is it which Art can properly imitate? Clearly not individuality. It can imitate mountains, rocks, trees, water, by generalities, and by indications of peculiar qualities of which the mind is cognisant; definite forms of all kinds exactly. It can suggest the general character, flexibility, and rotundity of foliage; the quantity, variety, and flexibility of the herbage; the fluidity and transparency of water; the multitude and general character and features of buildings; the solidity, quantity, and variety of rocks, and undulations of ground. It can impress the mind with the magnitude of mountains and the irregularities of their surfaces, and can convey to it the idea of fields and forests in the far-extending view. All these Art can sufficiently imitate so as to enable the mind to recognise them with pleasure, and to recal the impressions either received from the objects themselves, or from others of the same class.

The natural inquiry is, "How can these things be done?" I reply, by studying the philosophy of Nature, and the principles of Art; in studying the influence of forms on the mind; their combination, light and shade, and colour, and their significance and value, either separately or together, in expressing the idea or feeling intended to be conveyed. This is the field in which true genius may triumph over the difficulties of identical imitation; gratifying the sense of sight by accurate drawing, pleasing and harmonious colour, and effective composition; and at the same time rendering the mind sensible of the fact, through its pictorial representation, by suggesting feelings which would naturally be excited by a contemplation of the reality.

It is therefore necessary that the artist should not only be thoroughly acquainted with the effect of objects which are to compose his picture, with reference to their imitation and combination by means of Art, but also with the general philosophy of the mind, that through the images he employs he may act on it with power, having a definite aim, and knowing well what is essential to an effective appeal.

The imitation of Nature then, which, abandoning the individual, proceeds on a knowledge of principles based on the universal Laws of Nature, enables us to make the representation of her beautiful works abound yet more in beauty, by a union of graces selected by observation. We unite these to form a whole, which, although it may have no individual prototype, is yet in its separate parts wrought from Nature. It is evident that this mode of imitating Nature must of necessity be more like her general aspect of beauty, than the most faithful representation of any particular view or peculiarities; because, this likeness is free from those blemishes, pictorially considered, which ever accompany her works; and the artist who aims at the *beau-idéal*, by selection from her choicest productions, will not only be scrupulous concerning the objects which may form his picture, but also about the picture itself. He will endeavour to sublimate the beauties of Nature, and will present such only as shall afford the highest degree of gratification—the largest measure of enjoyment.

A new world of pleasure is thus opened up, by bringing forward the results of a mind which has been active through years of study to procure for us a feast of Nature's choicest fruits, gathered from her inexhaustible resources, and spread out in richer abundance than she is ever found to furnish in her most prodigal mood. Her most delicate traits, or her most striking contrasts, her tenderest or her wildest aspects, by an aggregate of beauties, will be represented in the poetry of her choicest characteristics—not in the dull prose of her everyday individuality.

To this end, it is not necessary that subjects the most complicated or comprehensive should always be sought. A mind accustomed to study Nature, and to submit to the guidance of her principles, must, by taking cognizance of her works in this way, become so alive to whatever constitutes the peculiar charms belonging to her every feature, as to be able to invest with its appropriate grace the humblest she could present.

Perhaps nothing could more pertinently illustrate what is here meant, or more clearly exemplify the difference between individual imitation for the eye and imitation for the mind, than the Daguerreotype. By this most ingenious discovery, identical imitation is carried out to the utmost degree; and its effects in informing the eye are truly wonderful; but, together with those objects which we esteem beautiful, others are also presented which the moment has brought together in ill assortment; and, in the midst of beauties, we also perceive much which is either offensive to the mind, or which in a picture would be better omitted. Here then, as the mind has had nothing to do with the production, either to leave out, to modify, to add, to select, or arrange in any degree, whatever might be necessary to the expression of action, passion, or sentiment, it fails to satisfy, or even to reach the mind. We look at a few of its coldly correct pictures, and are fatigued and satiated by their sameness and their continual appeal to the eye, and the eye only; whereas, were we regarding pictures of the same scenes, in which we could trace the thought and feelings of the painter, and sensibly perceive their effects on our own minds, we should experience a continual sensation of delight.

Works of Art, in order to gratify the mind, must give evidence of the exercise of mind. No identical representation of Nature, by a process purely mechanical, excites that peculiar pleasure which results from the contemplation of a work of pure Art produced by a skilful hand, directed by an intelligent mind.

Could a man be found as beautiful, finely proportioned, and graceful in his action, as the Apollo Belvidere, no cast of his figure would afford to the mind that gratification which results from a view of the statue, considered as the production of human genius, working out its own conceptions by the means of Art.

The eye is sufficient to detect what constitutes the individual, but it belongs to the mind to apprehend and develope generic characteristics, and to direct the eye in search of those delicate traits of beauty and expression, which must be sought ere they are seen.

I would not be understood to inculcate the notion that a slovenly imitation would satisfy; on the contrary, the real merit of imitation consists in placing before the eye, with the utmost skill in the use of the materials, the full power of truth in the features and characteristics of the objects imitated, so as to ensure to the mind a perfect comprehension of their form and kind. I would endeavour to illustrate what I mean by observing, that when we enter an apartment, in which there is sufficient light to distinguish well the objects it contains, and to satisfy us what they are in all respects, we are perfectly content; whilst, were we afterwards to view them under a brilliant and glaring sun, we should experience no additional satisfaction; our knowledge of the objects would not be increased, and both the eye and the mind would probably be distracted by the quantity revealed.

Neither is it here intended to deny that the individual objects should be imitated; on the contrary, they must be studied carefully, until we become thoroughly acquainted with their characteristic features and peculiar details, and have become habituated to observe the operations of those general laws and principles on which we are ultimately to depend and to carry into operation; so that whilst we learn what belongs to one object, we may take a general lesson for the representation of a class.

It is absolutely necessary to study the construction and details of every object with which we have to deal, that, when they are learned, we may apply them in aid of the general effect. We can then carry the quantity of individuality required to any extent necessary to our purpose. With such knowledge, we are unconfined and prepared to paint on any scale; but from the want of this, how often is the eye of the spectator offended by what he calls "daubs" or "blots" of colour, which are placed to do duty for objects to which they scarcely bear the remotest resemblance! and, although admitted on a small scale, on the poor excuse of want of space, yet on a large one this plea would be intolerable. How often has want of anatomical knowledge confined a painter within certain limits, beyond which if he ventured he betrayed to himself and others his want of power.

If the artist could not discover general laws, nor effectively apply them, no life would be long enough to collect materials for his purpose. Amongst the old Masters, those who generalised in the manner I have attempted to describe, produced, during even short lives, the most extraordinary number of pictures of exceeding beauty, and of rich imagination, whilst those who gave themselves up to mechanical and identical imitation, have left but few works, with little done for the mind, and even these were all that a long life was equal to produce.

Throughout the whole history of Art, it will be seen that identical imitation was abandoned by all those great artists who endeavoured to interest the mind, and to excite the feelings; the actuality of Nature set at defiance the most patient and laborious efforts; they rather availed themselves of resources more powerful and more at their command; comparing, selecting, and arranging the general characteristics of beauty; and by means of idealised forms and combinations, communicating their own powerful conceptions to the minds of others.

Works of Art, produced from such minds, address the intelligence and the feelings, and by them are appreciated; whereas, those in which the artist has striven to create illusion by laborious imitation, leave us cold, apathetic spectators, having only to open our eyes to find that all is done for us. It is impossible to derive gratification from a work of Art in which we are not invited to share,—not actively interested:—we are merely lookers-on.

If we look at the Dutch and Flemish schools, we there see individual imitation carried to the highest pitch; where all that could gratify the eye only was achieved by the most minute and painful accuracy, and the "most polished finishing;" whilst all that regards the mind was little more than elaborate failure,—a cold feast for the eye only. "Is this all we are to expect from imitation? and shall we be lavish of our admiration on a result thus fruitless as regards the mind?"

In the Dutch we too generally find the subject low and confined, and the imitation minute, individualised, and laborious; while in the Italian,* the subject is usually grand, allowing full scope for the exercise of mental power, the imitation general, and the forms idealised; the momentary suffrage of the eye being disregarded for the more lasting approbation of the mind.

Those widely different modes of representing Nature, proceeded not from any caprice or dispute as to whether this or that mode was the best: the

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* When speaking of the Italian school, I do not mean Italians only, but the painters of Spain, France, and of our own country, who adopted the same kind of imitation as theirs.

difference had its origin in the painters themselves, and resulted in the differences of their intellectual powers, characters and education.

Whether Art requires the mind in conjunction with the feelings to reach its proper end, we need only to look to some of the most distinguished of the Italian painters. In the sublime works of Michael Angelo and Raphael, of Leonardo da Vinci and P. Veronese, Titian and Tintoretto, what treasures are there of beauty and lofty conception; what enlarged sources of gratification to the imagination and the understanding, full of invention the richest and the most varied! Here the offering to the eye by imitation is made with the power of minds dealing with the images for the sake of the sentiments to be expressed by them.

In the history of these men, we find that they were distinguished for their literary attainments—that they were enlightened scholars and philosophers, sculptors and architects. Had they never been known as painters, it is highly probable they would still have left an enduring fame. These exalted minds soared far above the narrow limits of mere imitation: their business was to ennoble the soul.

It is also remarkable that Rubens and Vandyke, from among the Dutch, followed the Italian school. The former was not only distinguished in a pre-eminent degree as a painter, but as "a linguist, a scholar, a diplomatist, and an accomplished man of the world." Velasquez, the greatest of the Spanish painters, was of noble descent, chamberlain to Philip III., and ambassador to Pope Innocent X.; and our own Reynolds was not only the most distinguished painter of the English school, but "a profound and penetrating philosopher."

Hence then it is clear, if we allow Art to be an intellectual pursuit, that these bright and commanding spirits have shown us by contrast with the Dutch, that to pursue Art worthily, we must pursue it with the mind; and this comparison of the painters of the Dutch and Italian schools, and of their works, is sufficient to show that Art must indeed be a noble pursuit, to engage and engross such master-minds.

Let us for a moment suppose we could visit the studios of the Dutch painters, and witness them toiling on from day to day,—aye, from week to week,—often over a cabbage or a broom, a carrot or a kettle, the slow process requiring many wearisome days, and the object of all this labour, limited, mean, and uninteresting. Could we, the instant after, see the Italians, and others of their school, expressing passion, character, and whatever could rivet and engage, with truth, and swiftness equalling the rapidity of their lofty thoughts; and should we find that but few days, hardly hours, were required to put the magic scenes on canvas; could we, after this, for a moment hesitate in deciding which were the greatest *men*, and, consequently, which is the truest Art?

Seeing, then, that individual imitation which is limited to the senses, is unphilosophical in works of Art, however desirable and valuable in aid of science, and that a certain amount only is necessary,—which no laws can precisely determine, because it must ever be regulated by the feelings, and as these are not squared by rule and compass, and as we can, therefore, have no positive standard, —I know not how we can decide better on the share it ought to have of our attention, or on the superiority of a mental imitation, than by an appeal to the works of those who have exercised Art with the greatest mental power.

Having said thus much, it would be fatiguing to the general reader, and not very profitable to the artist, to enter into any metaphysical inquiry concerning the operation of impressions made by Art on the mind. I prefer, therefore, to confine myself to what is more obvious, more practical, more easily retained, and likely, therefore, to be more generally useful, and to answer the inquiry arising from the foregoing pages,—namely, that, "if Art be an imitation of Nature, and if Nature herself denies the power of identical imitation, what *is* that kind of imitation which should be aimed at?" The successful practice of true Art depends on this inquiry.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE JUDGMENT AND THE FEELINGS, WITH RESPECT TO ART.

IT will be necessary, in the first place, to show that the corporeal organs, and the faculties of the mind—the eye and the hand, feeling and judgment—must act in concert; and that their united action is required for the mutual improvement and the full development of their powers in the production of a work of Art.

On the distinction of their separate and combined influence, and their employment, singly and in combination, is based the first principles of Art, whether to acquire power in it for ourselves, or to appreciate it in others.

To make myself better understood, I will suppose a person, ignorant of Art, to have placed before him a picture of some historical event with which he is unacquainted. He can see the difference between men and women, can perceive that one laughs or another cries; and can perhaps distinguish the servant from his lord: but this is all. He is incapable of properly estimating the power with which the story is told, and equally so of feeling the influence of Art. He feels little, and knows little beyond forms and colours,—the mere symbols of the thing signified. He requires knowledge to assist him in comprehending the meaning of what he sees, to judge of the correctness or propriety of the representation, and to estimate truly the artist's talent.

Let the same picture be now viewed by a person well acquainted with the event portrayed, and the circumstances which preceded, followed, or bore upon it; let him also be in possession of those principles on the operation of which the painter has been able to place this scene vividly before him, with the actors as if living and breathing. How widely different is the effect of the same subject on the two different persons! The latter, through the assistance of knowledge, both sees and feels ten thousand things unknown, therefore unseen and unfelt by the other; he understands the symbols, and pierces within the veil; his intellect finds a congenial subject for its exercise, all his sympathies are roused and interested. He feels the depth and force of truth, a power approaching reality, and his inmost soul is made captive by the potent charm; while the other is a cold, uninterested, and unsympathising looker-on.

"The general objection," says Sir J. Reynolds, "which is made to the introduction of philosophy into the regions of taste, is, that it checks and restrains the flights of the imagination, and gives that timidity which an over-carefulness not to err or act contrary to reason is likely to produce. It is not so; fear is neither reason nor philosophy. The true spirit of philosophy gives a manly confidence, and substitutes rational firmness in the place of vain presumption. A man of great taste is always a man of judgment in other respects; and those inventions which either disdain or shrink from reason, are generally, I fear, more like the dreams of a distempered brain, than the exalted enthusiasm of a sound and true genius. In the midst of the highest flights of fancy or imagination, reason ought to preside from first to last."

To a clear perception of Nature, to a just view of Art, and to a right employment of its means, it is necessary that the mind should be in possession of the principles of Art, and the philosophy of Nature, that, under their guidance, the eye may be enabled to perceive the appropriate beauties of various objects, and the hand be taught to imitate and combine them under the direction of the judgment, so as to produce powerful effects on the mind. But to this end the feelings also are necessary; for without the feelings, all that the eye and the hand could accomplish would be, even if strictly true, but inanimate and dull. Were the feelings, however, to operate without aid from the judgment, they too would fail to affect, in consequence of their acting in ignorance. If the mind be inactive, and there be no feelings to give effect, the eye alone would lead to individual imitation, which is weak, contracted, and comparatively valueless. Of the artist who has thus without sentiment viewed and imitated Nature, it may be said that,

> "A cowslip by a river's brim,
> A simple cowslip was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

The faculties, the feelings, the eye, and the hand, must act in concert.

The only imitation deserving the name of real Art, is that which represents only so much of the individual object itself as may serve to show clearly what the object is; and more especially whatever is perceived by the mind, as well as by the eye: we must disregard as unworthy of attainment, whatever is not cognisable by both, and approved by the feelings. The eye itself relies on the mind for its perception of many things which, though known to exist in different objects, yet are not, under certain circumstances, distinctly perceived, until we become mentally conscious of their existence.

If imitation be exclusively confined to the closest fac-simile likeness attainable of objects or scenes, it is unworthily employed. For the purposes of pictorial Art we do not want the identical imitation of what is seen by the eye—the picture on the retina; but we want the picture which the mind sees through the medium of the eye, and feels by virtue of its own knowledge and associations. With the forms, light and shade, and colour of the objects, we want the sensations and emotions they inspire; we want whatever has captivated or awed; we want the charms of beauty, or the terrors of sublimity; we want all the busy train of thoughts that are awakened by passion or action,—by the cheerful lustre of the morning, or the radiant splendour of the evening; by the savage grandeur of the storm, or the stern magnificence of the tempestuous ocean.

The principles and the philosophy here meant are to be found in the nature of the object studied, whatever it may be, in the nature of the eye, and in the feelings which influence and give effect to the efforts of the mind in its appeal to the feelings and judgment of others.

The poet, the musician, and the artist require strong feelings; but we all know that, in the case of the two former, their feelings would be of small value, did not the one possess a knowledge of the laws of language, and the other of the laws of sound. It is not, however, so generally understood that the language of light and shade, and colour, is subject to laws equally real and philosophical.

Principles in Art are those primary generalised truths, founded on or deduced from universal laws, which lead, not only to its successful practice, but to a more complete and just appreciation both of Nature and Art. Principles make us more susceptible of the beauty of Nature and the power of Art in representing her; of what is essential to beauty, whether developed in the more noble productions of the pencil, or in all the varied objects, useful or ornamental, with which we are surrounded.

The laws of Nature are perfect, and if the artist adopt them as his guide, he tests not only his own works but the works of others, by a standard ever true, independent of fashion or the influence of great names. By what other means shall he attain the perfection he aims at, or avoid errors, from which even the renowned and admired productions, to which on every side his attention is directed as examples for imitation and study, are not exempt?

There are many who repudiate the idea of philosophy or principles as connected with pictorial Art, while they willingly accord immutable rules to other arts and sciences, and yield a ready obedience to them. "It must necessarily be," says Sir J. Reynolds, "that even works of genius, like every other effect, as they must have their cause, must likewise have their rules. It cannot be by chance that excellences are produced with any constancy, or any certainty, for that is not in the nature of chance; but the rules by which men of extraordinary parts, and such as are called men of genius, work, are such as they discover by their own peculiar observation, or of so nice a texture as not easily to be expressed in words; especially as artists are not very frequently skilled in that mode of communicating ideas. Unsubstantial as the rules may seem, and difficult as it may be to convey them in words, they are still seen and felt by the mind of the artist; and he works from them with as much certainty as if they were embodied, as I may say, on paper. It is true these refined principles cannot always be made palpable, like the more gross rules of Art; yet it does not follow but that the mind may be put in such a train that it shall perceive, by a kind of scientific sense, that propriety which words of unpractised writers, such as we are, can very feebly suggest."

Although I can lay no claim to power in my pen, and fully agree that artists are "not very frequently skilled in that mode of communicating their ideas," yet it does not therefore follow that "those refined principles" might never be within any artist's power to define and render as intelligible as "the more gross rules of Art," or, what I should prefer to call, the more obvious rules of Art.* At all events, for the sake of Art, I make the attempt; and should I succeed

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* As the laws of Nature furnish rules for Art, they cannot, I should say, with any propriety, be called "gross," by way of distinguishing the more subtle from the more obvious.

in plainly and clearly expressing in words "those rules and observations of so nice a texture," as almost to defy their verbal embodiment on paper, I trust I shall meet with indulgent suffrages, in proportion to the difficulty I have to contend with, and the service I may be able to render.

It is not altogether to be wondered at, if few artists trouble themselves to inquire into the causes which enable them to afford gratification to others, or from which they themselves derive gratification,—whether it proceeds from the constitution of the mind, or from the nature of the objects imitated;—whether works rich in imagination, or those of dry matter of fact, are the most capable of affording pleasure: if they but succeed in producing the effect, the cause is perhaps considered of less moment. All is generally referred to the feelings; as everything must be done to minister to their gratification. Are the artist's works poor, he is said to have little or no feeling; is the spectator slow to appreciate, he, too, is said to have no feeling; if a picture be described, it is said to be devoid of, or full of feeling; are the works of those great in Art held up for imitation, the feelings of their authors are descanted on, as if feeling, and feeling only, created what is worthy of admiration; and as if nothing more than feeling were necessary in the amateur to enable him justly to appreciate Art in its true sense, aim, and end.

The reference of everything to the feelings alone is the perpetual mistake. How is it to be ascertained that the feelings are true or in error, but by the reason and the judgment? The judgment, therefore, should be exercised, and the reason informed. No feelings, however strong, no sentiments, however expressive, can be conveyed in defiance or disregard of truth. Feeling is not knowledge; for the feelings are often excited by ignorance. What authority, therefore, can the feelings alone have? Do feelings alone make an artist? Has he no need of perception, of observation, of reflection, and of judgment?—of the power to trace effects to their causes; not only such as arise out of, or belong to the nature of any individual picture, or apply to one and another in its turn, but to separate these from those general principles, which guide and affect all—and all Art? May all these, among the noblest powers of the mind, remain inert, or be but feebly exercised, and a man yet become a great artist?—Never!—Feelings, strong feelings, are unquestionably necessary—nay indispensable; but they must be, and often are, sadly in error, unless regulated by the judgment.

A picture, or work of Art, is said to be a creation. If this be true, and it certainly is, then is that creation not owing to the feelings, since they do not, they cannot create; but rather to the faculties,—the reason,—the judgment. The feelings, desiring to be gratified, urge the judgment to activity, and when that has done its work, it remains for the feelings to decide whether they are, or are not satisfied—they are the umpires; if their verdict be "No," then the judgment must be again appealed to. The feelings may, and will, perhaps, indicate where the failure is, and sometimes decide what it is, but they never can provide the cure. They would appreciate in proportion to their natural and acquired strength, but the judgment must prepare and arrange the feast, and give zest and discrimination to the appetite for enjoyment.

The scientific man may be eminent through the judgment only; but the poet, the musician, and the artist, must have both judgment and feeling, in an eminent degree. As the feelings without the cultivated judgment are worth little, so also is the cultivated judgment without the feelings. Although the judgment may enable the artist to employ the images of Nature or the creations of his fancy, yet if he fail to affect the feelings, what he has produced is unworthy the name of Art. His own feelings will enable him to judge how far he is likely to affect the feelings of others; these will urge him on in the race; but if he have not judgment, observation, and penetration sufficient to unravel the intricate operation of the causes which both excite emotions of pleasure in his own mind, and powerfully affect the feelings of others, he labours in uncertainty, if not in vain: because "the fancy and the feelings are necessary parts of man's nature, and must be acted upon in connexion with his intellect." *

If artists have not made those wide, natural, and obvious distinctions between the faculties and the feelings, they have in vain attempted to teach. If they have never studied the approaches to the mind; have never distinguished the general from the individual avenues; have never studied the processes by which the mind is made to comprehend, or by which the feelings may be affected or improved, they have neglected the substance, and grasped at the shadow.

Eager in the pursuit of Art, the student has rarely cared to know why he

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* Principles of Architecture, in the Quarterly Review for December, 1841.

has succeeded; it is generally sufficient for him that he be successful. If he have not been called upon to instruct others, he has in studying for his own sake learned by experience and practice some ready means which his feelings have pronounced to be satisfactory,—some peculiarities of light and shade, and colour; and these the memory has treasured up. He clings to the chance successes thus obtained, occasionally adding something which he may have gleaned from the works of others; and if he have been fortunate enough to win applause, to secure it he is compelled to become a mannerist, lest he risk the loss of a reputation of uncertain tenure, because not based on known and invariable principles. "Those who blindly struggle with their feelings, till by accident they meet with something to satisfy them, having no system can never become strong in Art. The moment that an artist can give no better account of his work than that 'he thinks it will do,' forfeits his rank among those who contribute to raise and embellish the condition of man."*

It is not surprising that fixed principles in Art should be repudiated by many persons, since, in so many treatises on the subject, very often little is to be found but uncertainty; with perhaps a few special rules thickly enveloped in historical narrative and technical terms, not always intelligible, or if intelligible, of little further use than to explain the manner of some particular painter; and thus, individual criticism, applicable to particular pictures, is often mistaken and taught as truth of universal application. Much is said, perhaps, of man's emancipation from a state of barbarism by his natural love of imitation; of the progress of Art from rude beginnings to the establishment of various schools, and thus through various epochs to a more cultivated and more exalted condition, until at length Art has been employed for the noblest purposes. Still, all this amounts to little more than historical narrative, not always interesting to the general reader, and certainly unprofitable to the artist, unless at the same time he be informed of the means by which those painters whose works produce the deepest impression on the mind, attained to such a mastery in their Art; of the truths with which they were acquainted, and by which they were guided.

In place of this, we have "the effect and conception of Michael Angelo," his "grandeur of style and his aggrandisement of lines;" the "breadth and

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* Phillips's Lectures on Painting.

sweeping pencil of Salvator Rosa;" or the "polished pencil of Meiris, and Gerard Douw;" "the correct and determined pencil of Bamboccio;" the "elegance and precision of pencil of Teniers;" the "luxuriant style of P. Veronese;" or the "capricious compositions of Tintoret." How difficult, or rather, how impossible, is it rightly to understand the meaning of such vague terms, or to gather from them one practical lesson or one distinct conception of Art; and how little could it tend to advance the Art if all this could be understood, and followed! It could only lead to a distant and unworthy imitation of the painter held up as the model; and the student, whether practical or theoretical, would be dependent upon the very frailties as well as the excellences of his original for the gauge of his own acquirements. Instead of banqueting at a feast provided by Nature, he picks up but a few dry crumbs from the table of some celebrated artist; instead of slaking his thirst at the fountain, he catches here and there a random drop from a passing cloud.

If the man of learning be desirous of making himself acquainted with any other art or science, he knows he can only do so by making himself master of its fixed principles; with any one he can advance with certainty step by step, and real knowledge is within his reach; but if he look into graphic Art, nearly all is mystification; he obtains, perhaps, a few clear ideas, mixed up with many which are vague and unsatisfactory, and comes to the conclusion that it is after all but "a baseless fabric."

Need these things be? My reply is, No.—Even in discussing Art abstractly, it is evident that if right or wrong, it must be so for some reason, whether discoverable or not; in either case the truths of Nature must be followed or violated. These truths then constitute the philosophy of Nature, and the principles of Art; they are universal and immutable; dependent on no school, no fashion; no individual and narrow views, or peculiarities; no confined perceptions; but are broad, comprehensive, and permanent.

When the idea of principles of universal application has, as a natural consequence of the presumed uncertainty of all principles in Art, been repudiated, the student falls back on those feelings which prompted him to embark in his arduous pursuit, consoled, perhaps, that other artists, whom he sees in the foremost ranks had probably no surer ground, and resting on the hope that if he bring unwearied industry, and the same natural ability to the task, he may likewise reach the goal. The amateur has long ago ceased to hope that he should see his way through the maze of uncertainty to the discovery of any fixed principles which might aid him in deciding on the merits of a work of Art.

Many have revolted at the idea of positive laws, and have refused to submit their genius to the control of what they considered fetters; not seeing that the knowledge of positive laws is the true light to the exercise of genius.

If Art be a pursuit worthy of the human mind, it is so only in proportion as mind is employed and displayed in it. Now, as imitation is the natural source of Art, if Art were dependent on this alone, the eye and the hand would be sufficient to gratify the senses. If to afford gratification by imitation of the highest order, the mind must be engaged, and if it be asked—on what? I reply: In studying the effects of Art on the mind; in learning by what means, and subject to what laws, the feelings may be affected through the sense of sight; what degree of imitation is necessary for this purpose, and within the reach of Art; in the study of those laws which Nature herself observes in her works, externally and internally, in their effects on the mind,—correcting her forms where accident may have changed or deformed them; in a diligent observation of the qualities, either essential or peculiar to each, in order to acquire a knowledge of the most beautiful and perfect; in combining and arranging objects proper to the subject, and under the influence of light and shade, and colour in accordance with their nature. By a course of study and practice thus framed and directed, we may undertake either to imitate, by means of Art, those natural scenes which are distinctly presented to the mind through the medium of the eye, or to depict such as are the creations of imagination. To pursue and apply Art thus, is to pursue it with the highest aim, to apply it to its noblest purposes, and make it worthy a place among the best pursuits of mankind.

Another and important argument in favour of the necessity of employing and studying the operation of sound principles, is, that the artist may be encouraged to proceed in his work, unaffected by the deformed and repulsive appearances consequent on, and inseparable from, every stage of its progress,—more especially if he paint in water colours. His judgment should be able to promise ultimate gratification to the feelings; and, but for this, his work in its various imperfect stages, would be so repulsive as to induce him to set it aside in utter hopelessness, or to abandon it altogether. In many instances this has, indeed, occurred with every artist.

"It is more common," says Mr. Phillips, "and generally found more agreeable, to indulge in the pleasurable sensations imparted by able works of Art, and far more easy to talk of them, than to search out the latent principles whence is derived the pleasure they afford." It is, indeed, far more easy and agreeable to read a language, if we understand the meaning of the words, than to make a grammar of it, to ascertain its rules, and give reasons for them.

"To learn," says Mr. Phillips, "the fervour of enjoyment must subside, and calm reflection and earnest inquiry take its place. We must bring the mind, the reason, to our aid, ere we can comprehend the mode by which the powerful or pleasing effect which moved us has been produced. In studying the works of others, he who aims at excellence must divest himself of the immediate influence excited by his admiration, and apply his mind to the consideration of those combinations, whether of form or colour,—of actions, or expressions,—which have been productive of the emotion he feels.

"Perfection in Art is obtained by submitting enthusiasm to the control of reason. That man who so regulates his mind as to cast aside the warmer emotions in just time for the more useful, and ultimately more grateful and more solid pleasure arising from inquiry, in his turn reaps the gratification of being able to excite it in others.

"It is to the delusive notion that Art is almost wholly the product of fervid feeling, unaided by sober judgment, that are owing the many unsound opinions of Art so universally prevalent. He who does not feel enthusiastically can never be great in Art, can never attain that power which makes it estimable, nor ever enjoy either the beauties of Art or Nature. He must himself derive enjoyment from them, or he can never endure the labours of a practice necessary to acquire the power to excite the like enjoyment in others. He must reason calmly while he labours.

"Art has not and cannot have any other basis than Nature, at once the source, the test, and the end. It is the mistaken view of Art under the name of style, or some other equally vain affectation or pretence, which misleads and confuses.

"System in Art then, to be valuable, should be founded on the truth of Nature, and the considerations for which Art is employed, so as best to direct the Artist to the full development of his powers. The capacity to separate truth from all that disguises it, and portray it for ourselves and others, is the invaluable gift of a few."

I certainly cannot pretend to the possession of such a splendid gift, if gift it be. No one individual is likely to have the power to develope the whole truth; but many may have something to contribute. Whether what I offer be truth, I leave others to determine by the test of Nature and Reason, to which I appeal. If it be truth, it does not emanate from me: I lay claim to no more than the observation of some of those "latent principles" from which the pleasure afforded by Nature and Art is derived.

"The most effectual method to check empiricism, either in Art or Science, is to multiply the number of those who can observe and judge."*—I have not laboured, therefore, in this field for the sake of the student only; but as much for the sake of the Art itself, that by spreading a knowledge of it, a just appreciation and encouragement might follow.

In all ages Art has contributed to exalt the civilisation and renown of every country in which it has been cultivated; and the proper objects of study, and the development of whatever is true, noble, and pure, depend as much on him who encourages, as on him who receives encouragement; for, as the artist will naturally labour in that field which yields reward, it is quite clear that he who brings the reward should be able to distinguish the meritorious from the meretricious; otherwise, all the earnest labours of the man of genius,—who, in a noble enthusiasm, and regardless of pecuniary considerations, cultivates his powers to their utmost stretch, brings forward the fruits of a mind,—will only have tended to place him far beyond the comprehension of the world to which he submits his talent, and he will be in danger of finding that he has climbed only to be out of sight, and that for even the chance of fame he has to depend on posterity. It is surely of importance, then, that the amateur should have a competent knowledge of Art, and be as little left to the guidance of his feelings alone as the artist. Although he may not practise Art, yet, by understanding its just principles, and having his feelings properly cultivated, and directed by his judgment, he may be able to

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* Alison on Taste.

appreciate what is truly excellent in Art, and thus essentially contribute to its honourable advancement.

For want of such knowledge, it is greatly to be regretted that many, even in high places, promote by misplaced encouragement a *fashion* in Art, and lead attention to what is often meretricious and poor, rather than to what is natural and great. The consequences of this are deeply felt and widely spread. Every liberally educated man has occasion not unfrequently to estimate the claims of Art; and, for his own sake, as well as for the sake of his country, it is important that he should decide correctly. It often happens that he is called upon to decide on the designs for erecting a national building, or for enlarging or repairing one. For want of the requisite knowledge to guide his decision, many buildings have been erected of doubtful merit, and not a few of such unquestionable demerit as to cast a reflection on the national taste. Many churches and other public buildings have been disfigured by changes or additions, offensive both to the eye and the mind. Many mansions, once the ornaments of the country, now deform the landscape to which they formerly lent an additional charm,—deprived of their appropriate beauties, misshapen and metamorphosed at the mandate of caprice or ostentation.

Without a knowledge of Art, it is impossible to judge correctly of the merit of designs, either for public or private buildings,—of the claims of the architect, more than of those of the painter or sculptor; for a building is, or ought to be, a work of Art. It has, indeed, been as much a fashion to refer to the ancient architects as to the ancient painters, for examples and authority,—to those of Greece more especially; and, whether a Theatre or a Church were required, a Custom-house or a College, a private Mansion or a Town-Hall, a Palace or a Prison, we have seen a Greek temple travestied to suit each and all of those widely different purposes. This must have been in consequence of deciding by a standard universally famed; but which, although it has justly been the admiration of all time, is yet not applicable through all time, to all purposes, all circumstances, and all people.

Though novelty in Art, as well as in Science, however well founded, be received with hesitation, and not likely to become immediately popular, yet, if the architect, who also is an artist, can support the novelty which springs from his imagination, and prove that it is founded on those true principles of beauty and fitness which he has found in Nature and fashioned to his purpose, erroneous prejudices must give way to the convictions which truth, on any subject, never fails ultimately to produce.

Principles then, whether they relate to architecture, sculpture, or painting, must be known, in order that the eye may not become accustomed to admire or acquiesce in what is wrong, but be taught to discover and correct it, and in new applications of truth to develope newer and higher manifestations of beauty. To illustrate this, let us suppose a person but little skilled in Art, to have produced something in which, from his want of knowledge, his eye detects no fault; and that he takes it to some accomplished artist, who, instantly perceiving its defects, informs him of the principles which he has violated, and thus makes him sensible of the faults he has committed, and tells him either how they may be remedied in his present performance, or avoided in future. The consequence is, that the production which but a few minutes before was viewed with complacency, and perhaps pride, is now found to possess so many faults, that, instead of affording satisfaction, it annoys and displeases. To what is the change to be ascribed? Not to any alteration in the sight, but to the fact that the eye looking through the medium of the mind, now in possession of the truth, can no longer be satisfied with what the reason disapproves of. Every effort is consequently made to satisfy the mind and the feelings, now become more acute and more sensitive, by closely adhering to that truth which is felt to be so powerful and so essential.

Artists and amateurs are prone to rely on their feelings alone; but as these are extremely liable to be excited by mere inconsiderate impulse, it is necessary that they should be controlled, regulated, corrected, and strengthened by the judgment; and the judgment can only be in a condition to decide correctly when it is rendered independent of the bias of prejudice or fashion, by a knowledge of the true principles of Nature and Art.

CHAPTER IV.

ON BEAUTY OF FORM.

NO one, I think, will doubt the material world to have been constructed and adapted to the animal wants and gratifications of Man; and it is equally unquestionable that it has been so ordered, as to contribute in like manner to his need of mental enjoyments; and that he, in his turn, has been so "curiously made," as to feel naturally urged in search of the gratification provided for him, and which he receives in proportion as he prepares himself for it.

Amongst the sources of enjoyment which Nature has presented to us, is beauty of form. "The highest beauty of form," says Sir J. Reynolds, "must be taken from Nature; but it is an art of long deduction and experience to know how to find it. We must not content ourselves with merely admiring and relishing; we must enter into the principles on which the work is wrought; these do not swim on the superficies, and, consequently, are not open to superficial observation."

Our conceptions of beauty of form or of any kind can never exceed that of the objects from which, in every degree, our ideas and sensations of beauty are derived. By this I mean, that as all our ideas of beauty are derived from a contemplation of the works of Nature, our perceptions can never exceed the beauty of her perfect works. As amongst them man stands pre-eminently conspicuous for the beauty of his form, the human figure, both as a whole and in its parts, should, therefore, stand as the model and the test of the beautiful of form. To that I shall continually refer for the proofs and illustrations of the principles which I advance; and if they be found to agree with this test, they must, I think, be admitted to be true.

Besides the beauty of form, there is also the beauty of composition, of light and shade, of colour, and of expression. To the consideration of beauty under these categories or heads, as being the immediate province of the artist, I mean to confine myself. Though in each, beauty is referable to certain principles, it is yet more distinctly definable to the judgment in the two first—form and composition—than in colour, light and shade, and expression; form and composition depending as much on the judgment as on the feelings; whilst colour, light and shade, and expression, being principally referable to the feelings, do not appear to admit of such distinct definition.

"The first ideas of beauty formed by the mind," says Dugald Stewart,* "are, in all probability, derived from colours. Long before infants receive any pleasures from the beauties of form or of motion (both of which require for their perception a certain effort of attention and of thought) their eyes may be caught and delighted with brilliant colouring, or with splendid illumination." It may be added, that the perception of the beautiful in expression probably first dawns on the infant mind about the same period:

> "Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem."

It is probably owing to the word "beautiful" being applied to express pleasing sensations derived from so many other different sources, that we so frequently find, in works expressly treating on the subject, and intended for the instruction of artists, such vague and indistinct accounts of the constituents of true beauty, as existing in objects of sight; and the same indistinctness being thus connected with the idea of beauty, especially existing in the sources from which the artist expects to obtain it, he has generally relied on his feelings only, and has not sought so much aid from his judgment; because, what has usually been offered to it, has either failed to impart clear and distinct ideas, or has been found not applicable in practice.

In discussing this portion of my subject, I do not intend to introduce anything more of a metaphysical character than what may be absolutely necessary, but chiefly to confine myself to such observations as may be

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* Philosophical Essays, Part 2, "On the Beautiful." "Notwithstanding the great variety of qualities, physical, intellectual, and moral, to which the word *beauty* is applicable, I believe it will be admitted that, in its primitive and most general application, it refers to objects of sight."

practically useful; searching after beauty, not as an amusing speculation, but in order to discover it as an object of Art. I shall at the same time endeavour to show, that variety is essential to beauty, and so inseparable from it, that there can be no beauty where there is no variety.

The necessity for variety as essential to beauty may be familiarly illustrated, by supposing a number of beautiful women to be seen together, and that each merited the appellation. It would be found, on examination, that, however great the number, they all varied; and that this variety, in fact, constituted the aggregate beauty of the whole number, and was inseparable from it. Again, supposing we could select one from among them, who by universal consent was admitted to be the *most beautiful*, what beholder would desire that some magician's wand should make the rest exactly like her? Who, if such a change could be effected, would not feel a desire to return to that variety which must ever be the captivating constituent of beauty, both in the individual and in the aggregate? Without the one, we cannot have the other. Were beauty always to take the same form and expression, the eye and the mind would be fatigued by its perpetual recurrence. The contemplation of any one example would suffice for the whole; but, as variety is given to beauty, and is inseparable from it, the eye and the mind are excited and gratified by fresh and unanticipated combinations of form and expression. Were not variety necessary to beauty, it would end in there being but one model, one standard for every object; and as everything must of necessity be brought to that standard, the same object would be continually presented to our view.

We come now to another consideration: that, as variety is indispensable to beauty, so perfect beauty requires that variety to be infinite. It is this infinite variety which constitutes the perfection of Nature, and the want of it which occasions every work of Art to be imperfect.

Endless, inexhaustible variety, is a primary characteristic of Nature. Is there not *infinite* variety in every kind of object?—are two leaves, or two blades of grass, or two flowers, or any two things, animate or inanimate, exactly alike?

Let us look for a moment among the birds. Who that has an eye for the beautiful in colour, would prefer the macaw to the pheasant or the peacock? In the one, we have monotony and large masses of positive blue, red, and yellow, with little variety; in the other, we find endless changes and shades of colour, which as much defy the description of the pencil as the pen. The colours in the macaw are comparatively crude, and want that extent of variety, which in the peacock harmonises its yet more gorgeous hues of infinitely varying gradations.

I am fully aware that, while investigating this subject, I am treading on delicate ground; but, with all respectful deference to the talents and industry of those who have preceded me, I am not the less convinced that much has been left by them either unexplored, or very imperfectly described; for, though much may have been written to interest the philosophical speculator, there yet hangs about the question much that is not defined or determined, at least in such a way as practically to guide the student in Art. A considerable portion of this indecision and confusion may be ascribed to the employment of the words "Beauty" and "Beautiful," to express the different sentiments, which, though all of a pleasing kind, are yet derived from many very different sources. For instance, if we see a squirrel leap, with sprightly confidence and unerring certainty, from branch to branch, we exclaim, "Beautiful!" If a balloon ascend with easy motion towards the clouds, we call it beautiful. We apply the same epithet to a vessel, when, impelled by the favouring breeze, she gently yet irresistibly cuts her way through the waters. We call an apt metaphor beautiful; the Apollo Belvidere, and the Medician Venus, beautiful; and of the adaptation of the eye and the hand to their several purposes, we say it is beautiful.

Beautiful as each thing, in a certain sense, is, I can find nothing in all this constituting such "relations" as are the foundation of the beautiful, nor anything "denoting different modifications of the same idea;" and I merely take notice of these expressions in order to show the student that it is his business to convey the sentiment of beauty in all its phases of form, composition, light and shade, colour, and expression. He must confine himself to these, and convey it by means within their power; and must, therefore, acquire those ideas of the kind of Beauty which is proper to each, that he may know what he is working for; when and how to impart it to the features of his picture.

The perception and the appreciation of the constituents of Beauty have formed an interesting subject of inquiry, at various periods, from the time of Aristotle to the present day; and much has been written, from every diversity of feeling and opinion. According to the theory adopted by Father Buffier, "the effect of Beauty depends on habit alone; the most customary form in each species of things being invariably the most beautiful." To illustrate this, it has been said that "a beautiful nose is one that is neither very long nor very short; neither very straight nor very crooked; but a sort of middle among all these extremes, and less different from any one of them, than all of them are from one another."

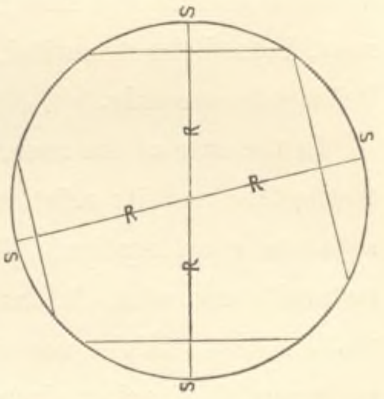
I can understand how from among "the most customary forms of any species," the most beautiful may be selected, if we have the power to do so; but I cannot understand how "the most customary are the most beautiful:" they may, indeed, be beautiful, but "*the most* beautiful" is an appellative which belongs to one only.

In the case of the nose, the beauty of its length and breadth is in proportion to the face, and its relation to the other features, but its beauty of form is a separate consideration. With an anxious desire for positive instruction, I naturally ask, what is that form which is "neither very long nor very short; neither very straight nor very crooked; but a sort of middle among all those extremes?" I acknowledge that the thing sought is to be found somewhere between the extremes indicated; but what is it? What is the thing which is neither this nor that, but something? The reply, "It is something, neither one thing nor another," which is in perfect accordance with the theory, seems to show that the writer who propounded it had either a very vague idea of Beauty, or that, if his idea were distinct, he could not express it clearly. The theory may be very ingenious, but it is indefinite, and, for that reason, of no use; like the truth, that "a thing is not lost if you know where it is to be found,"—

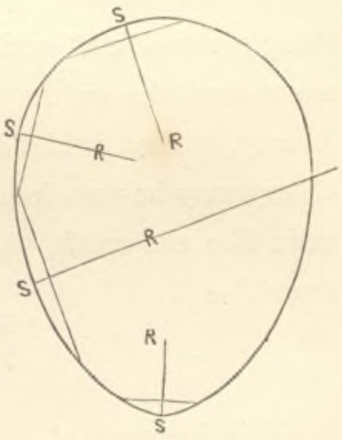
> "Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
> The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear."

This instance of a beautiful nose may serve for many others of the same kind, and I have quoted it the rather because it occurs in what Dugald Stewart calls a "masterly illustration" of Father Buffier's principle. Without some more precise illustration, however, though the philosopher might fancy that he understood the principle, yet the artist would not derive from it any knowledge which he could practically apply.

I come now to the more tangible illustration, and, by consequence, to the proof, that "Variety is an indispensable constituent of Beauty; and that perfect Beauty is constituted of infinite Variety." This may, I think, be shown by an examination and comparison of the sphere and the egg. As, however, these objects can be sufficiently indicated for my purpose by a line, and as I am dealing with form as represented by an outline, I must, to be more clearly understood, speak of them as superficially represented; and our first business will be to determine which of these forms is the most beautiful, seeing that they are the constituents of all such forms as we call beautiful. First, with respect to the circle. On cutting segments of different sizes, S S S, we shall find that the curvature of the arcs is precisely the same, whatever may be the difference of size; since, from the construction of a circle, the circumference is, during its whole circuit, equally distant from the centre C, and, consequently, all the radii, R R R, are of equal length, and the curvature is in every point the same. This form, therefore, cannot be the *most* beautiful, because it wants variety.



On the other hand, if we cut segments from the egg S S S S, we shall find, that whether their chords be equal or not, their curvature and assumed radii, R R R R, are unequal, so that no part of any segment would repeat part of another, or of itself on the same side; for as the curvature of these segments is perpetually changing, they could not be represented by radii, such as I have been here obliged to place, in order to make myself understood. Here, then, is greater variety, and, therefore, more beauty. This, so far, is only offering the test to the eye, or the limited power of the compasses; but if, instead of this, we take a mental view, we shall feel yet more thoroughly conscious of the sameness of curvature in the sphere, and of the infinite variety which the ovoid or egg form admits of. If we should conceive segments infinite in number cut from a sphere, we should still have the same curves ever recurring; but should we conceive an egg so cut, the curvature and radii of the segments would be of infinite variety, and consequently that of the two, this is the *most* beautiful form.



Pl. 2.

Fig. 1.

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In the circle we see and feel without preparatory education, and without difficulty, its sameness, and, therefore, its want of beauty; but in the egg it requires reflection to see or to feel any great amount of that variety which it possesses; and as, also, by our natural powers we see, feel, and understand that all circles must be alike in their properties, so it is only by the acquired powers of a well-practised eye, and feelings rendered sensitive through experience and a well-informed judgment, that we can perceive by how much one egg differs from another, or which, among many, is the *most* beautiful—is the nearest to perfect beauty in its outline, in consequence of that infinite variety, which is the essential constituent of perfect beauty of form.

The human form is made up of the egg-shape and the sphere: of spherical forms, where utility or mobility is required in parts, either hidden from the sight, as in the articulations of the bones, or wholly or partially visible in the iris, the pupil, and the ball of the eye; but in outward and exposed parts, where beauty is combined with utility, Nature has been prodigal of the egg-shape, and sparing of the circular or spherical.

Let us begin with "the human face divine:" has it not, in its general contour, the form of the egg? Although this fact is well known, yet, as every affirmation of this kind is better determined by reference to the things themselves, than to any abstract idea of them, I have given examples in the three heads, in Pl. 2, which are severally drawn on the principle of the circle, the egg-shape, and the ellipse, that the fact may be the more apparent. Will not that face be generally acknowledged to be the most beautiful in its form which is egg-shaped? Would the most untutored eyes fail to decide in its favour, rather than in favour of Figs. 2 and 3? In Nature we find faces continually approximating to those latter forms; and here again we have additional evidence, that variety is a constituent of beauty, inasmuch as the face in Fig. 3 is elliptical in its form, and having, therefore, more variety than Fig. 2, which is circular, we feel it to be more beautiful; and the three stand, like the degrees of comparison —good, better, best. The same features have been preserved in each, so as to afford proof of the truth of our proposition, independent of any influence or assistance from the features.

But let us proceed a little further into the examination of the prevalence of the ovoid, or egg-form, by viewing the features separately, beginning with the eye. If we regard the lines in Fig. 4, we cannot fail to perceive, that, though they differ from each other, they are yet, in every part, ovoid curves—portions of ovoid figures—differing in direction, form, and size. To prove that they are so beyond dispute, I have completed, in this figure, the entire ovoid forms, by means of a faint line, of which the eyebrow and upper eyelid are segments.

It is remarkable, that, in the eye only, do we see the circle, and that complete only in the pupil; for though the iris be also a circle, we are not permitted to see it entire when the eye is in a natural state, as a portion of the circumference is hidden by the upper eye-lid, and but for this circumstance it would present a repetition of the same form as the pupil. And here we may observe how beautifully it is contrived, that the iris shall just touch the lower lid, and only touch; for were this circle again cut, as in Fig. 5, by the lower lid, in like degree as it is by the upper, we should then have two segments of the same circle repeating each other. Who for a moment bearing in mind these facts, and comparing Fig. 5 and 4, could fail to perceive that variety is a law of beauty? or who, on reflection, would not be convinced that it is endless variety which constitutes the beauty of this "most beautiful creation?" How wonderfully are all the varieties of these curves in Fig. 4 rendered yet more conspicuous by contrast with the perfect circle of the pupil, and the *suggested* circle of the iris! This is the only instance in which the circle is introduced in the human form, or in which it is so contrasted with the egg-shape.

As we have seen what constitutes the beauty of the egg, so we may now see what constitutes the beauty of the eye; and, as in the former, the most beautiful of a number is that which has the greatest variety, so it is with the latter, and with every curve of the human form. It remains now only to give the additional illustration by the drawing of an eye, as Fig. 6, Pl. 2, where every line is the segment of a circle, devoid of the variety which has been proved to be essential to beauty, and inseparable from it; and though Nature presents approximations to such forms, the most superficial observer must at once see and feel the striking difference between such forms, and forms of the *greatest* beauty. He who knows what beauty consists in, and what is essential to it, and who examines Nature by the light of that knowledge, will not only be able to perceive such obvious differences as are here put before him, but, what is of far more consequence, he will become alive to those more delicate

Pl: 3.

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traits which separate the *most* beautiful from the beautiful, in every nice and delicate distinction; and because his perceptions of beauty and the beautiful have been awakened, and his opinions formed on a knowledge of the truth, they will remain unchanged by extraneous influences of any kind. The nice distinction of form which separates the various grades of beauty lies within the breadth of a line, which can never be appreciated or applied but by those whose feelings and perceptions have been rendered especially sensitive and acute by a continual search into the nature of lines, both separately and in combination, as expressive of beauty. A charm is communicated by refinement, which it is as much out of the power of ignorance to feel or appreciate, as it is out of the power of verbal language to express or expound.

Were we to examine each of the features in succession, we should find the same results. It would, however, occupy too much time and space to do so here; and as my object is to awaken in the student a spirit of observation for himself, I merely draw them in Figs. 7 and 9, 8 and 10, and leave him to compare them, and form his own conclusions; to exercise his feeling and judgment, not in distinguishing positive deformity from beauty, but the better from the good, the good from the indifferent.

Let us next direct our view to the field, where again Nature has been lavish of beautiful forms; let us take a glance at the flowers. Of these, though there are many whose general forms *suggest* the circle, nevertheless their leaves are composed of curves more or less ovoid. For instance, the Convolvulus, the Gum Cistus, the Lily, and the Rose—who can fail to appreciate the beauty of the Rose-bud, or to see, in Figs. 1 and 8, Plate 3, that every line is an ovoid curve?

Of the Convolvuli, Figs. 3 and 4,* there can be no doubt which is most beautiful. The objectionable lines in Fig. 4 are those forming the circumference, because they are parts of circles, instead of being oviform; but their want of variety in this respect, is, in some degree, compensated by each division of the contour being a segment of a circle of different magnitude. These are redeeming qualities; but they are, nevertheless, insufficient to give it beauty equal to Fig. 3; and, indeed, they are the very cause of its possessing less.

But for the knowledge of the principles which I have faintly shadowed out,

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* These figures have been taken from a book of studies, used in the School of Design at Somerset House, many of which are very beautiful.

it might be a matter of dispute which of the Figs. 3 and 4 is the more beautiful in form; and it might be uncertain which of any forms were the *most* beautiful. It so commonly happens, that the respectful deference of the student to those from whom his examples have emanated, induces him to receive them without inquiry; but he should remember that examples, however beautiful, are little better than guide-posts are to those who cannot read, unless he be furnished with irrefutable reasons in principles of universal application. Of what avail is it that the endless beauties of Nature, or Art, present themselves on all sides, if the mirror of the mind, being left opaque through ignorance, is incapable of reflecting their number, or their brightness, and can but catch with difficulty a random ray?

If what I have already said on this subject be insufficient to make the reader sensible of the greater beauty of one form, or the less beauty of another, we may gather additional proofs from the works of man; we shall find in architecture, which is one of the noblest arts of adaptation, though not of imitation, examples of great beauty. In the ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman, but especially the Greek, in the volutes and ornaments, and general form of the capitals and bases of the columns, we have the same ovoid curves as may be seen in Figs. 5, 6, and 7, Plate 3, where all the curves, with one exception in Fig. 6, are ovoid; and this single instance of a part of a circle in the second member of this latter figure, gives additional beauty by additional variety, on the same principle that the beauty of the ovoid curves in the human eye is enhanced by the circular forms of the iris and pupil. All the enrichments of the Greeks were beautiful, and had ovoid curves; and such curves are remarkably displayed in the ornament, called the Grecian honeysuckle, as shown in Fig. 2, which, viewed through the principles of beauty I have here given, may be pronounced one of the most faultless ornaments from the suggestions of Nature that man ever devised.

Among the Romans, beauty in architecture declined; and we find them substituting the circular for the ovoid in their architectural enrichments and mouldings. This change would hardly have taken place, had they been aware of the essential constituents of beauty. If their "men of might" who deviated from the examples they studied, had worked on the unchangeable foundation of Nature's laws, we should have found, among the productions of their different

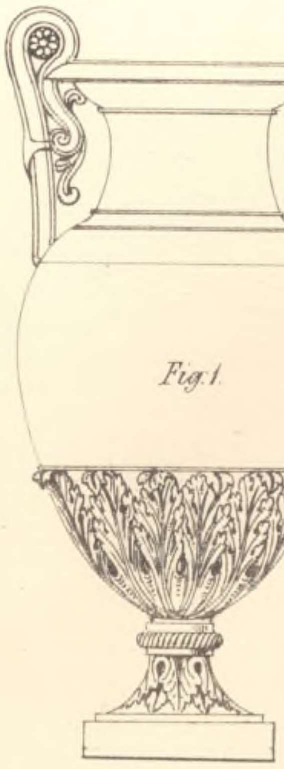

Fig. 1.

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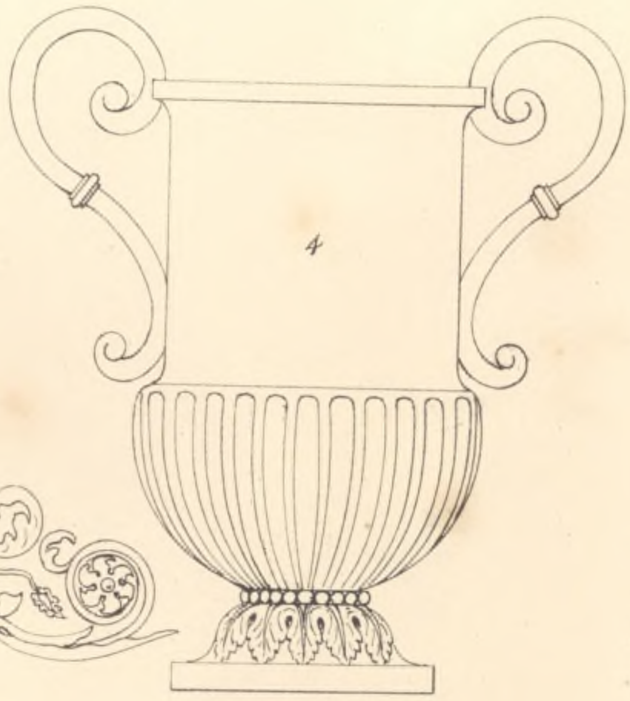

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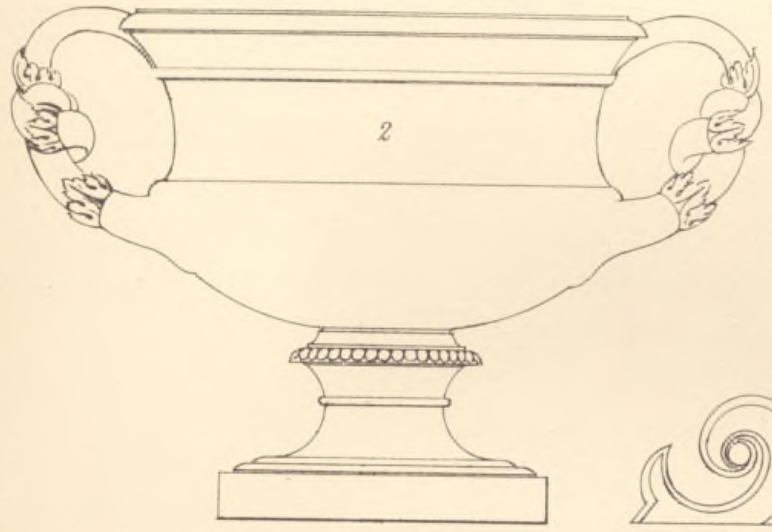

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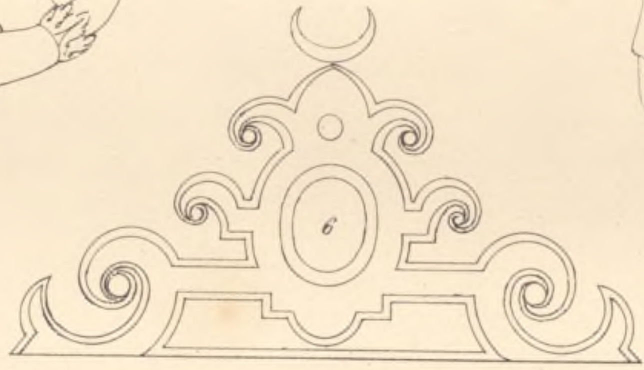

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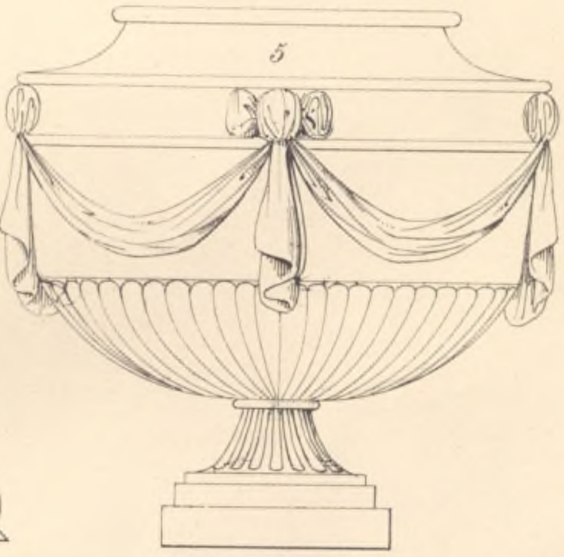

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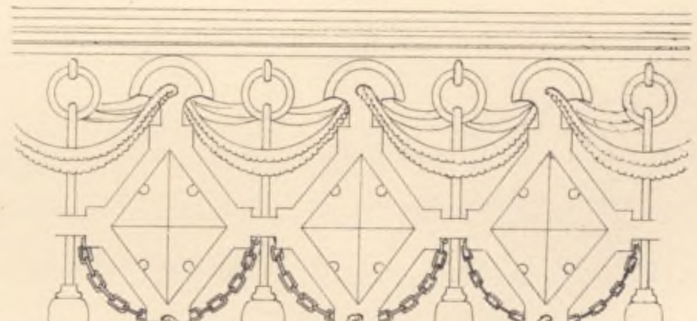

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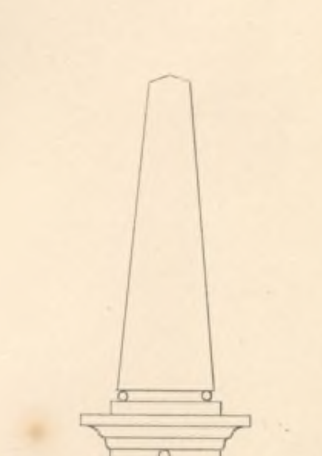

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tastes and talents, not a decline, but an augmentation of the beautiful unfolded by the Greeks, and yet further developed in newer and more varied forms called for by the necessities of a people differently circumstanced,—of different manners, customs, feelings, and opinions.

Though a multitude of examples crowd upon me, and I must limit my illustrations, yet still I cannot resist referring the reader to the forms of the Greek vases, two of which I have here given in Figs. 1 and 2,* Pl. 4. How varied and how beautiful are their ovoid curves; and how perfectly in harmony with these are all their enrichments of ornament, or their additions of utility! How beautiful are these ornamental productions of a polished, enlightened, and tasteful people compared with Figs. 4 and 5,† where all the curves defining the forms are parts of circles, and the general contour devoid of pleasing variety. Let us now look at what our own country produced in the times of Henry VIII., Elizabeth, and James I., and even later, when a stone-ball, and a series of rectangular solids, such as Fig. 9, or an obelisk, as Fig. 10, were the prevalent architectural ornaments; and when crowds of straight lines, mixed with segments of circles, as shown in Figs. 6 and 7, were the staple appliances of interior or exterior decoration. Puerile whims and fancies were disseminated, and became fashionable, in consequence of there being no standard by which beauty of ornament might be ascertained. Opinions, one way or the other, were esteemed equally valid; and fashion, influence, or rank, decided.

Is it possible to compare Figs. 3 and 8, with Figs. 6 and 7, and be unable to decide in which there is beauty, and in which there is not? Figs. 6‡ and 7§ are a wild, senseless farrago of lines—horizontal, perpendicular, oblique, and circular—without taste and without intention—as if they were the production of children at play, trying to do "something pretty," and "all out of their own heads."

This must not be understood as a sweeping condemnation of every production of that or any other period; examples of great beauty, such as Fig. 8‖, are to

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* Fig. 1 is from a vase formerly in the Musée Napoleon. Fig. 2, antique Bacchanalian vase, in the possession of the Earl of Warwick.

† No. 4 is from a Roman vase in the British Museum: I have added the handles. No. 5, from one of the vases on the south Façade of the quadrangle of Somerset House.

‡ From Hatfield House, Herts, 1611.

§ Weston Hall, Warwickshire, 1545.

‖ Bramshill House, Hampshire, 1603.

be found mixed up with deformities; and if in the present day we are returning so zealously to what our ancestors, in those days, and in the time of Louis XIV., did for us, let us at least show that generations of subsequent civilisation have quickened our perceptions of the beautiful too much to suffer us to take the chaff, either *with* the wheat, or *for* it.

Decision on beautiful forms, of whatever kind, does not, and ought not, to depend on vague capricious taste and uncultivated feelings; for unless they be controlled by sound judgment, formed on observation of the truth of Nature, we are not in a condition clearly to distinguish the beautiful, and consequently can have no power either to judge of, or to depict it. Unless from such education no two persons could have the same opinion of the beautiful, and should even the opinion of one of them happen to be right, he would be unable to give a sufficient reason for it; but if the elements of beauty, founded in truth, be understood, beauty may then be demonstrated and distinguished from every shade of deformity, which is so often mistaken for it, or set up by fashion in its stead.

In carrying out our examination, we come now to the variety arising from opposition of lines. On reference to Example 1 of Plate 8, we shall find that the opposite sides of the figure, and of each limb, differ materially; and that if on one side, as at the knee-joint, the line be convex, on the opposite it is concave, as shewn by the letters B B; or if on one side they be gentle convex curves, as along the shin-bone, they are opposed by the bolder convexity of the calf of the leg. In the features of landscape, and in groups, or single figures, we will now see the application of this principle, which, by giving variety, gives pleasing and satisfactory results. It equally applies to foliage, whether in the folds of a tree, trees by themselves, or in groups. In Fig. 1, Plate 6, it will be perceived that each projection, P P P, is opposed by a corresponding sinuosity, C C C. Again, in the tree, Fig. 2, where the foliage on one side projects at P P, on the other it falls in at C C; where on one side it is scanty, on the other it is full. The same alternation is perceived in the group, Fig. 3, which on one side presents a mass of foliage, for the most part covering the stems and branches, while on the other side the foliage is scanty and broken, revealing the stems and branches, the convexity at B being opposed by the concavity at C, and by the more rigid lines of the stems and branches. Nor is it thus only with the foliage; we shall find the same principle displayed in the stems and branches themselves, as in Fig. 4.

21 b

An. Carache delin. 19. C. Masse Sculp cum privil Regis.

Copy of one of the Prints contained in a Work entitled Recũil de 283 Estampes gravées aprés les Desseins des grands Maitres — A Carache, Campagnole, Titian, &c. — Dans le Cabinet du Roi _ 1754.

Fig 1

2

3

4

5

A. Carracci 5 A

6

Titian 12 D

7

A. Carracci 88 E

8

Titian 17 D

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We may have still further proof by comparing the mountains in Plate 8. It can admit of no doubt which are the most pleasing; and, on examination, we shall find that in Example 5, Plate 8, the lines are opposed to each other in the manner I have described; but in Example 2, Plate 8, though there are some oppositions, there are many lines which either repeat each other so entirely, or so nearly, as to produce monotony and insipidity. Thus we have a proof, that, in submitting our views of the beauty of other objects to the tests which the human form affords us, we are always working up to the most exalted of the models which Nature has given to us for contemplation.

The truth of this principle may, perhaps, be yet more strikingly proved by the *reductio ad absurdum*,—showing that the inevitable result of its violation is want of beauty. For this purpose I give examples in Figs. 5, 6, 7, and 8, Plate 6. I have not invented those forms, but have taken them from a large and well-known work, entitled "Recueil de 283 Estampes, gravées après les Desseins des Grands Maîtres, A. Carracci, Campagnole, Titian, &c." They are by no means selected, but are from among scores of subjects, not only bad, but positively puerile; and notwithstanding, they bear the authority of such great names, I do not hesitate to say, that it would puzzle the most inventive ingenuity to contrive worse examples of tasteless deformity and monotony. I have given these, because it has unhappily been (if it be not still) a general practice to hold up such *stuff* to the amateur for admiration, and to the young student for imitation; and though their eyes and their senses may have revolted, and they may have turned away in silent disgust, they have not dared to give utterance to their feelings in opposition to the authority of great names. That these are great names and deservedly so, is beyond dispute; nevertheless, error is error, come from whence it may; and it is the more needful to say so boldly, because of the harm which such examples do coming from such sources. Well may the indifferent world, who listen to affected rhapsodies bestowed on such things, without a trace of truth or beauty, believe Art to be something beyond the possible chance of their comprehension.

I am aware that I shall provoke hostility by expressing such opinions; but with truth, and a real love for Art to support me, I venture to declare them, being persuaded that I have only openly avowed what will be re-echoed by every one who sees and thinks for himself.

We come now to the consideration of varied quantity, and the varied direction of lines; and if we look to man again, we shall find, from first to last, variety is the law on which he is framed. For variety of quantity, we need only examine the hand, where we shall see that every joint differs, not in form only, but in size; and if we follow this out through the whole osseous frame, we shall have the most convincing evidence of variety, both of form and quantity.

Turning to the figure in Plate 8, we there see that the entire line of the back, *a*, *a*, *a*, is formed not only of lines in every variety of direction, but also of quantity, as at a″ a″ a,″ no two of them being alike. In order that what I mean by variety of direction may be more clearly understood, I have continued the lines on the left-hand side of the figure, by delicate lines, C C, in the same direction, as their variety in this respect is thus rendered more obvious.

Let us look at this principle of varied quantities as applied to architecture, and take the simplest and most familiar illustration in domestic buildings, as in Figs. 1 and 2, Plate 7. Can it be necessary to ask, whether the varied quantities of the windows in their length, and their subdivisions in the panes of glass, the panels of the door, and the enrichments of Fig. 1, are preferable to the sameness and monotony of all these features in Fig. 2? or whether the perspective view of any building, which increases its variety to the eye, be preferable to any geometrical elevation, however varied? and can it be more difficult to decide on the beauty of more elaborate architectural features by the same test—their different quantities?

From these we may turn to Gothic architecture, where in the crockets, finials, and foliage, and particularly in the arches, are found those ovoid curves already spoken of; and looking again to unequal quantities, we find their value in the tower to the left of Fig. 3,* which all would acknowledge as a good, if not a beautiful, example of Gothic architecture. The tower, to the right, however, where all the divisions are purposely made equal, as is shown by the dotted lines, is of a very inferior character. Again, the spire at the right hand of Fig. 4,† with all the divisions equal, is by no means pleasing or satisfactory: in the left hand spire, these have been changed in submission to the law of different quantities; and I think few will dispute that its beauty is

* St. Neot's Church, Huntingdonshire.

† Spire of Welford Church, Berkshire.

Fig: 1

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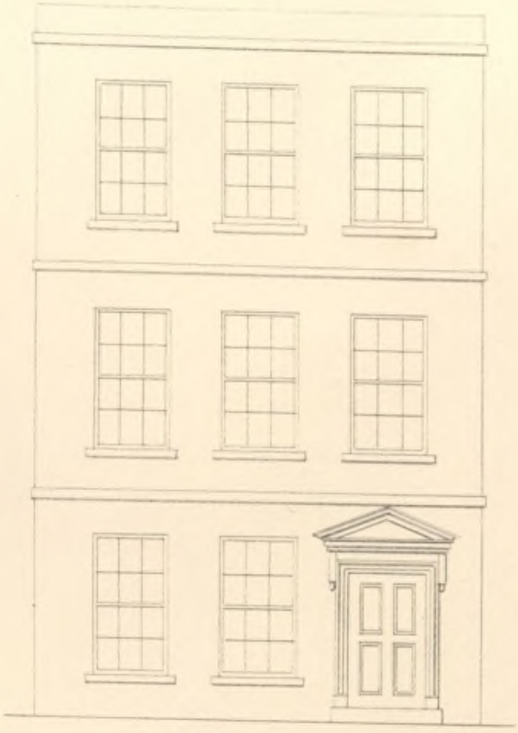

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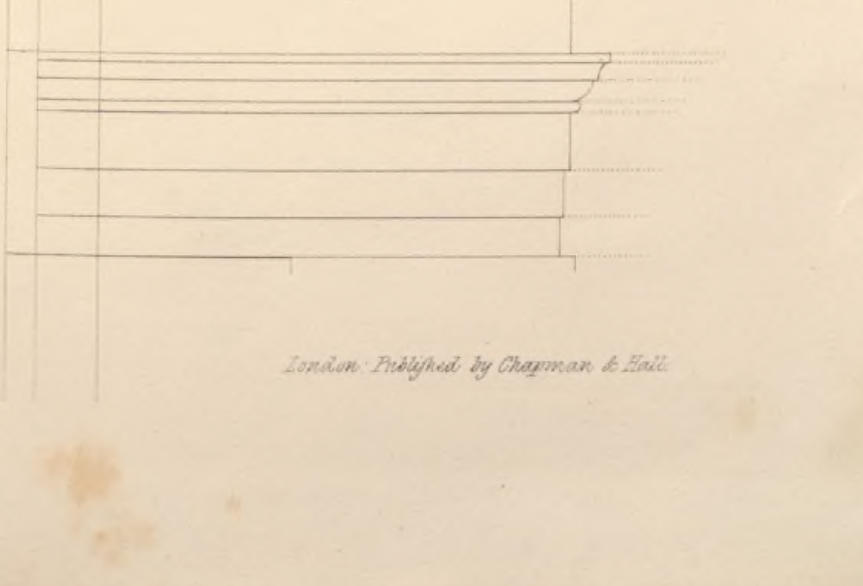

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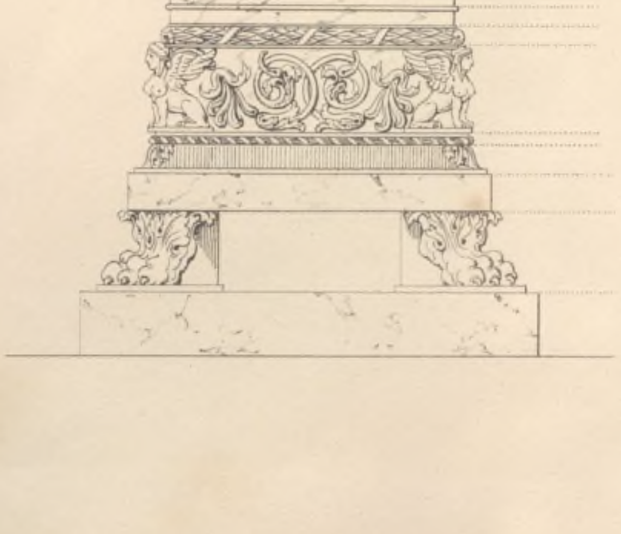

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improved. As a last proof, if more were wanting, we may turn to Grecian architecture, which has been pronounced beautiful by the concurrent suffrages of many successive generations. Looking at the separate members of Fig. 6, Plate 3, and 5 and 6 of Plate 7, we shall find that they differ in quantity by every gradation, minute or great; and if the student doubt that their beauty is in part to be attributed to this, he has only to make the divisions equal, to rob each example of its beauty.

That the examples of Grecian architecture which I have given, owe their beauty most sensibly to this principle, and that the other examples also have received beauty by its presence, or been deprived of beauty by its absence, must, I think, be admitted, unless it be first decided that varied quantities form no part of aggregate beauty, or unless it can be shown that changing the examples, in defiance of this principle, improves their beauty.

It would be useless to give more examples of this kind; indeed, no single volume would be sufficient to contain the instances which might be adduced in support of what has been advanced. Enough, I think, has been said to convince the student of the value of variety; and should he want further evidence, he has only to look around him.—It will, however, be necessary to detain the reader a little longer to shew him other instances of variety in the *direction* of lines, as a principle of beauty.

We could not deny that the outline of the figure which I have given, Example 1, Plate 8, is a beautiful line, unless we deny the beauty of the human form. I do not here speak of the line in its reference, and adaptation to others in exhibiting the whole form; but only in reference to its *unequal quantities* and *varying directions;* nor can we deny that the form of the hills in Example 2, Plate 8, is also pleasing, since they too possess the same outline, which the student may easily assure himself of, for by tracing either he will find he has traced both; but as in following exactly the line of the figure in its application to the hills, we have with the varied quantity and direction of the lines a curvature for the most part foreign to their nature; they are not therefore so beautiful as they might be. For more direct and more positive confirmation of our principle, we must turn to Example 5, where lines of every variety of direction and quantity are given, marking distinctly the characteristic features of mountains; and a glance will be sufficient to ascertain, by comparing this with Example 2, which is the best; that is, which is the most like *beautiful* Nature, and most in accordance with the principles which make it so. In Example 4 we have yet another proof. Example 3 is a line drawn from Thorwalsden's Venus, from the arm-pit, *a*, to the knee, *b*: here again we have the same result—difference in the direction and quantity of the several divisions of the line marked *a″ a″ a.″* The same line, marked C C C, has been applied to the stem of the tree, with another line added to convert it into the image intended. That the form of this stem is beautiful, must be admitted, since it is both like Nature, and is formed on a line of beauty drawn from the highest source.

I particularly wish to be understood here, or rather not to be misunderstood: the student is not to suppose from what I have shown him, that he is to look for the human form in every varying object, for this would be the very opposite of what I have endeavoured to teach him;—what I mean is, that, having made himself master of its beauties by a thorough knowledge of the principles on which they are developed, he will, by having strengthened his judgment, and quickened his perceptions, unerringly seize at once, and as if by intuition, on beauties of every other kind.

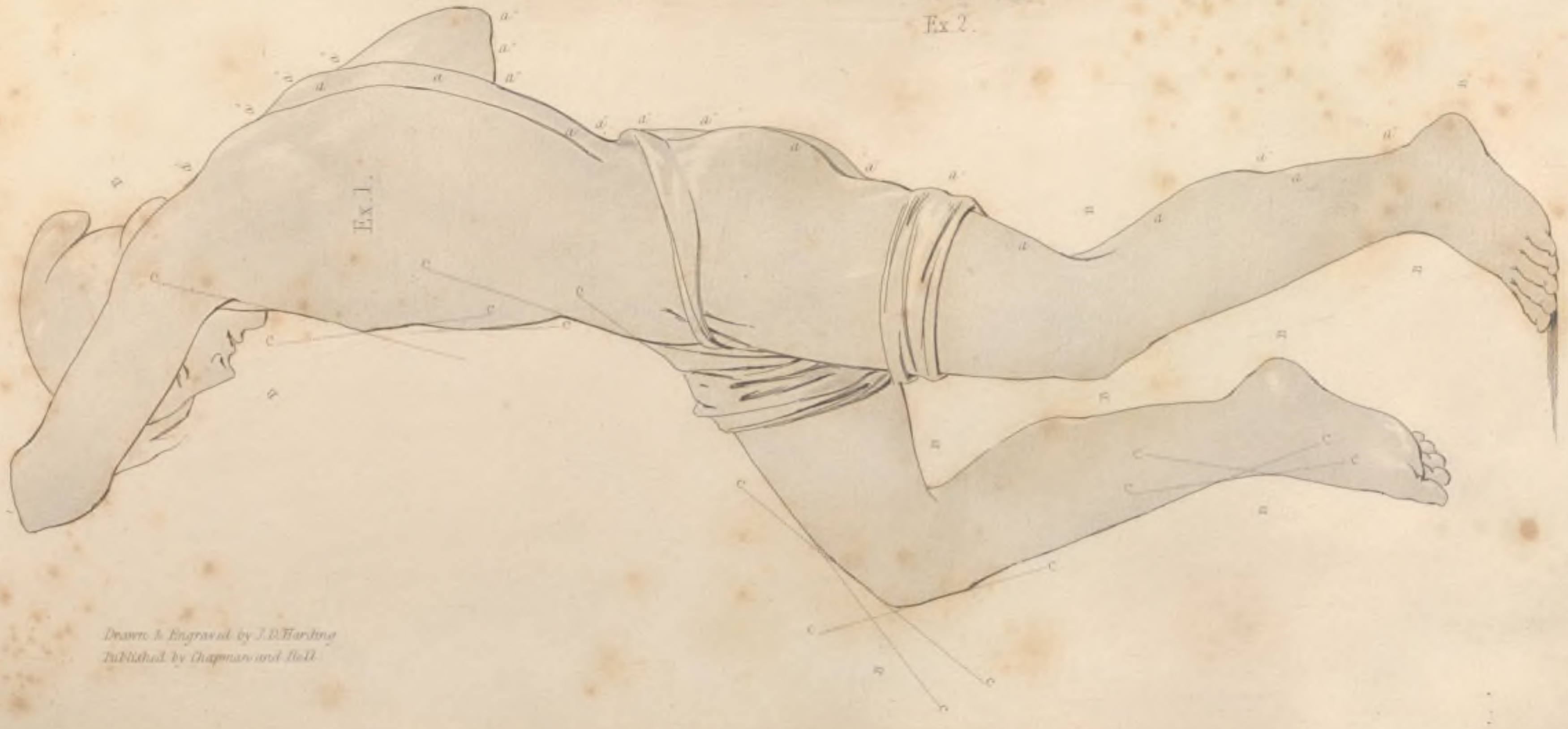
Further evidence of the necessity of different *quantities* may be found in Plate 9, in the three waterfalls, all of which have been drawn from Nature. The most untutored must at first sight decide that Example 3 is by far the most beautiful, and Example 1 the least so. In the falls themselves, he will find that according as the direction of each presents different quantities, and according as the rocks, among which the water has forced its way, present lines of various directions, so is each fall beautiful as a whole. In Example 1, the divisions of the fall are equal, and the lines of the rocks on each side of it mock each other by a repetition of lines; this example, therefore, has no beauty; in Example 2, the divisions of the fall vary, and consequently it is better than Example 1; but it is spoiled by the sameness in the lines of the rocks on each side of it. In Example 3, we have none of these defects, or very few, and we do not hesitate to pronounce it to be the most beautiful; we *feel* it indeed to be so; and, having tested this by unquestionable truth, we know that our feelings do not deceive us; and, thus guided, we can examine more critically even such subjects as this, whether in Nature or represented by Art.

Ex 4

Ex 3

Ex. 5

Ex. 2



Ex. 1.

Drawn & Engraved by J.D. Harding
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Proportion, and symmetry dependent on it, are greatly indebted to the qualities I have endeavoured to illustrate; but they cannot be either so satisfactorily determined, or applied. The size of the limbs must be dependent on the height; their obesity or meagreness the feelings alone can determine, whether they are large to clumsiness or light to attenuation. There are certain proportions, such as a figure being 7½ or 8 heads high, a certain number across the shoulders, and so on; but these are poor aids. It is quite clear to those who are the least observant, that we attach the idea of agility and grace to lightness of frame and limbs, as in the Apollo; strength and heaviness to their full development, as in Hercules; but the amount of either must depend on the artist's feelings to decide according to the sentiment it is his wish to convey.

Amongst all the illustrations which might be produced, I do not think any more apposite can be found than in the ape tribe; the Ourang-outang, of all animated creation approaches the nearest to man, but only to shew man's superiority by the contrast. In this animal we lack the ovoid curves in the head, and the varied quantities in the limbs, and consequently the varied direction of the lines; and hence the want of beautiful proportion and symmetry: had he these, he would be man; wanting them, he is a monster.

By the perpetual contemplation of the human form, and the study of its perfections, the artist, by invisible steps and inappreciable degrees, beautifies his own conceptions of the forms of all things. From this model he derives the power for his imagination imperceptibly to raise and refine whatever else he touches, and learns to remove, or discard the mean and the common-place, for what is rare, purified, and beautiful.

I hope I have now done enough to show the student what I meant at page 20, "Elementary Art," when I said "That he who is best acquainted with the beauties of the human form, the most perfect work of Nature, will have an eye more keenly alive to observe all her other beauties, and all the properties of form, quantity, symmetry, proportion, and variety; he will be more apt in discovering the pictorial merits of every work of man, more skilful in improving the beauties of Nature, or in correcting the deformities he may find in either;" and I trust I am now justified in saying that he who has not laid the foundation of his study in the human figure, "hopes against hope" to become a great artist.

As beauty in all things proceeds from the same universal principles, the student, when acquainted with them, will devote himself the more diligently to a preparation which must so powerfully influence, and so certainly guide him in the employment of his talent. Having studied variety and beauty from the most perfect model, every other object which he may intend to depict will be viewed, as to beauty of form, with reference to the principles developed in that model, and be scrutinised by a judgment founded on a knowledge of truth, and rendered more prompt and discriminating by practice and observation.

As the correction of individual forms by those known principles of variety and beauty, in conformity with Nature and the character of the object, is to a certain extent within the reach of all; and as those principles are capable of unlimited application, so he who in his employment of them, can, by superior intelligence and talent, approach nearest to that perfection whose distinctive character is infinite variety, produces the most perfect beauty, and may, therefore, be pronounced the greatest genius.

We have now concluded our examination of the constituents of beauty in the human form, and have shown that it consists of infinite variety in the curvature, inflection, opposition, quantity, and direction of lines. All other objects, to be beautiful, must possess the like constituents in their peculiarities or essential properties; and whether we seek the beautiful of form in Nature, or desire to supply the want of it, we can only estimate her beauty in all things, or our own efforts to add to them, by the same standard, for there is no other.

The human form, above all others, exemplifies that infinite variety, which, Dugald Stewart says, is associated in our conceptions with all the operations of Nature, and this characteristic is as decidedly displayed in form, as in any other feature of creation; and precisely in degree as form of any kind displays such variety, so will be the pleasure it affords. Studying forms then, of any kind, through those principles or properties which constitute the beauty of the human form, the student, though but slowly, yet most certainly, advances his perceptions of beauty, without danger of having to retrace his steps. His love of Nature will be strengthened, because it has root in far higher and nobler principles than mere fancy, and will become still more confirmed in proportion to the enlargement of his experience and practice.

The following, from the pen of Mr. Opie, should never be out of the student's mind:—"Of the several branches or divisions of Art, separately considered, design or drawing is undoubtedly the most important; for on drawing, not only form, but action, expression, character, beauty, grace, and greatness, chiefly depend. Colour represents nothing; and lights and shadows have no meaning, till they are circumscribed by form. Drawing is, therefore, evidently the foundation and the first element of the art, without which all the others, ideal or practical, are not merely useless, but nonentities."

The inquiry into the beauty of form must not be looked upon merely as an amusing speculation, interesting only to the theorist, but of small value in application; on the contrary, it is of the highest importance to the artist, and is, indeed, the only sure basis for the accomplishment of whatever is refined, great, or noble in Art.

A knowledge of the constituents of beauty of form, acquired by a study of the works of Nature, prompts the artist to depict her in her infinite variety of beauty; whilst the adoption of a merely conventional standard of beauty, derived from the productions of a particular school, leads only to servile imitation; and the result is, that uninteresting insipidity, without feature and without significancy, which resolves everything into the same forms, and breaks down every predominant and distinctive quality,—which gives a Greek statue for every figure, prince, or peasant, and puts a Greek column on duty for the beautiful in every situation, or for every purpose, in an ascending and descending scale from a door-post to a dinner-lamp. The sentiment of true, living, beauty, which gives to each object the perfection of its kind, graceful or majestic, is nurtured in the imagination by the investigation of Nature, and the comparison of her degrees of beauty one with another; while, on the contrary, it is impaired and perverted by a blind devotion to any particular image, either devised by an individual's own conceit, or conventionally established as an object of worship by others. True ideas of beauty can only be acquired by investigation of the means by which Nature, in her forms and characteristics, affects our minds with pleasing sensations.

Without form we should have rarely any means of knowing one object from another; and without beauty, we should not, with respect to form, prefer one object to another. It is from the drawing of an object that we are sensible of its position; by the *perfect* drawing that the imagination can conceive its aspect in any other position; and by *beauty* of form that the mind is won to its contemplation or gives preference to it in one position rather than another. It is chiefly in this power over the forms of objects to impart to them intellectual beauty,—to shew, not what they actually are—but what the artist has learned to think of them, that he triumphs over the difficulties of light and shadow, space and colour, or can make his strength in this respect compensate for his feebleness in every other.

Beauty of form is not to be understood as referrible only to the contour of objects, or whatever may be imparted by drawing the outline: there is not a touch from the pencil of a skilful painter but takes some form or other. It is not merely important that an idea of truth should be conveyed, but truth connected with beauty and refinement, derived from the intellect operating on our perceptions, and impressing on the mind that general conviction we all have that Nature is beautiful. We may—we do, fail in equalling her beauty of light, colour, and expression; but in beauty of form, and the arrangement of objects, we may be more on an equality with our otherwise transcendent prototype.

Here, then, at the outset of Art, we strive to detach ourselves from the trammels of individual imitation, for the attainment of that kind of likeness which, together with the utmost share of beauty properly belonging to the object, and its distinctive character, shall present it in its utmost perfection; bringing home to our minds every pleasing or elevated idea associated with it, so as to impart the noblest conception of the thing itself; rising from the material to the embodiment of the mental image,—from beauty which is "of the earth, earthy," to that which is born of the intellect.

"The discovery or conception of this great and perfect idea of things—of Nature in its purest and most essential form, unimpaired by disease, unmutilated by accident, and unsophisticated by local habits and temporary fashions, and the exemplification of it in practice, by getting above individual imitation, rising from the species to the genus, and uniting, in every subject, all the perfection of which it is capable in its kind,—is the highest and ultimate exertion of the human genius." *

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* Opie's Lectures.

Ex: 1.

Ex: 2.

Ex. 3.

How great must be the amount of infused and pervading beauty in a work of art, where every truth derives a living power from a well-spring of feeling, whose source the intellectual powers have deepened, purified, and ennobled!

One word more on the subject of beauty of form, as expressible by means of drawing. With this possession the painter flings his thoughts on canvass, and gives his ideal images a visible reality, with a power which precludes the idea of exertion, or the suspicion of failure. The absence of effort raises our estimate of the Artist's power; he executes with brilliant precision, and unerring aim: true, instantaneous, and precise, every line claims imperishable honours, from his vivid expression of accurate thought, sound knowledge, and intense feeling. He can set aside his dependence on the means of art, or mere pains-taking; he knows that time has nothing to do with a work of art—that minutes are not measures of its merit—beyond the fact that he must, ere his task be done, give form and expression to his glowing thoughts, and strike the imagination with power.

I speak of the merits of execution as a *means* to further the end of Art: as an art by itself it is contemptible,—a brilliant error, dangerous, though attractive, and which yet too frequently wins an ephemeral popularity by glossing over defects with specious pretensions, and delusive blandishments. Nature is either wilfully neglected, boldly contradicted, or emblazoned in the harlequinade of meretricious attractions, which are either incompatible with her character or disparaging to her beauty.

To deny to brilliant execution the honour due to its proper exercise, would be to deny to Art its charm *per se.* When properly displayed within its true limits and to a worthy end, it imparts grace and beauty to every object it touches; it "triumphs gloriously" over the repulsive dissimilarity of the means of Art, as compared with the end: it emanates from a familiarity with the humbler truths, and sends the greater home to the mind, in elegant, eloquent, and powerful language.

CHAPTER V.

ON COMPOSITION.

COMPOSITION may be defined to be such a collocation of the several objects in a work of Art, both relatively to each other, and with respect to the whole, that each and all may most efficiently contribute to the perfection of the general design.

COMPOSITION as applied to pictorial Art has generally been understood to be dependent on the caprice of the artist; and many of the rules which have been given on the subject have been based for the most part on the conventionalities of the schools, principally those of Italy. Rules, when drawn from particular pictures, if alone applicable to them, however positively and satisfactorily they may be defined, must necessarily be incapable of general application, and are therefore to be ranked rather among the curious lumber of Art, than among those valuable guides which may be deduced from a knowledge of the necessities of Art, and a close observation of Nature.

Although it be true that in composition the artist is but little dependent on the arrangements of external nature, and that he is left chiefly to himself to determine the order in which objects shall be associated, yet even in this he is, for the most part, guided by the principles of Nature; for, although they are not revealed to the eye, they are derived from philosophical induction wrought out by the mind, either penetrating into the more comprehensive application of simple principles, drawn from individual objects and general laws of Nature, or into more hidden causes which have their origin in the peculiarities of the Art itself. Composition brings us to a higher degree of beauty, arising solely from the association of objects, individually beautiful, in such a manner that they may possess additional charms, owing entirely, in this respect, to the skill and talent of the artist; and if it be incumbent on him to select the most beautiful forms of Nature, it cannot be less imperative that he should present them in such combination as will most agreeably, and most powerfully, affect the spectator.

In the construction of his work the artist is at once in the regions of the ideal; his invention brings the objects into combination, and his imagination gives them such order as to display most powerfully the beauties of Nature through the resources of Art. Mere technical correctness in composition will avail nothing; it is here that the painter must show the wide difference between intellectual and mechanical art; between dry matter-of-fact imitation, and ideal exaltation of Nature; here the inquiry must be, not how closely she is imitated in the individual objects, but how powerfully the artist has embodied the impression she leaves on the mind.

Whether the subject painted be history or landscape, it will, when viewed as a whole, be comparatively powerful or powerless according to its composition, that is, accordingly as the several objects are well, or ill arranged, in conformity with some general design, so as to completely bring home to the mind of the spectator whatever the Artist proposed to represent in his work, especially in a picture.* This being an uncontrovertible fact, it is, then, of the greatest importance to the artist to be able to ascertain, and to apply those laws of composition which have so material an influence on the advantageous display of the features necessary to his work. A knowledge of those laws is by no means necessary to the spectator, but is indispensable to the painter, who, otherwise, could only succeed by chance in one of the great essentials of his art.

Of all the divisions of Art composition is, next to correct drawing, the most important; the least restricted to direct imitation, the most dependent on our will, and the least directly indebted to Nature. It may indeed be said that Art is its own law-giver on the subject of composition.

Pictures, whether of Landscape or History, are equally supposed to be veritable representations of Nature, not merely of the objects constituting them regarded separately, but of their arrangement or combination; and if the historical painter be more at liberty to deal with these as his imagination may

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* I say, especially *a picture;* for, excepting in bas-reliefs, the sculptor does not attempt to represent the same multiplicity of objects as the painter.

dictate, they must yet be so arranged as to appear perfectly natural, and must occupy such places as we could easily conceive they would have occupied on the occasion and at the moment chosen. Could we ourselves have been witnesses of the scene, it is possible we might have found the groups of figures less pleasing; but in their ever-changing attitudes, the spectator, present in body, and in mind, participating in the passing interest of the event, would fail to notice what would be a defect, if it were represented in a picture, where all is positively motionless.—As the artist's work remains subject to tranquil scrutiny, both as a historical representation, and as a production of Art where we can alternately study the action and the actors, defects of composition, or any other defects of a pictorial kind, become more strikingly apparent than in the real scene, where they might have been unnoticed, except by a person who viewed it as a subject for a picture. Again, if the subject be a landscape, so much does Nature give to us for contemplation and enjoyment, in kind and degree so perfect and so unapproachable by Art, that her defects are in the reality unheeded; but when presented on canvass, much of what Nature displays, is either absent altogether or present with many inevitable defects, in consequence of the limited capacity of Art. Whenever, therefore, as in composition, the painter can, by the manner in which he brings objects together, compensate for his failures or feebleness in other respects, it is his duty to avail himself of such means as it places within his power. Hence the necessity for a knowledge of composition, and its claims on the artist's attention.

The student, I presume, is already convinced, that over the forms of objects he has entire control so long as he preserves their generic and specific character. In their combination, however, he has a yet wider field for the exercise of his skill in moulding Nature to his purpose. In this department, opportunities for the improvement of his picture, by means of an appropriate collocation of its several objects, are not to be neglected by the painter, seeing that in the practice of his art, he is on all sides pressed by difficulties, some of which are, indeed, insuperable. Where, in a picture, however excellent, are to be found, the light, the reality, the life of Nature? In these she leaves her imitator far behind; he can but feebly suggest that which she vividly displays:

> "Do what he will, he cannot realise."

The *flat surface* on which the picture is painted, and which the painter has

Pl. 10

Ex. 1.

Ex. 3.

Ex. 2.

Ex. 4.

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to invest with ideas of space, is not among the least of the difficulties with which he has to contend. The four right lines at right angles with each other, which form the usual boundaries of a picture, present another obstacle to the painter, in consequence of the artificial limits thus assigned to his view; for it is as well known to all the world as to himself that natural views have no such formal boundaries. These may appear at first self-evident and unimportant facts; but it will be seen that they lie at the root of many of the difficulties with which the painter has to contend in the composition of his subject.

In the composition, the painter makes his first effort to convey the idea of the separation of the various objects, and to overcome the difficulties which I have pointed out as connected with the flat surface on which he paints. To effect this, none of the principal or leading features of his picture should be perpendicularly over, or horizontally level with each other; because if they be so placed, they either repeat actually or by suggestion, the horizontal and perpendicular lines which artificially limit his picture, and which require to be concealed as much as possible from observation. The consequent advantages may be seen by comparing the Examples 1 and 3, 2 and 4, in Plate 10, with each other. In Examples 1 and 3, the leading objects and features are so placed that they are neither level with, nor over each other, and the expression of space is the result. Here, forgetting the surface and its boundaries, we feel able to penetrate into the pictures, and move among the figures, trees, and buildings; to float in the sky or walk along the ground. In Examples 2 and 4, however, no such feelings are suggested, at least not by the composition. In Examples 3 and 4, a line drawn across the pictures from C to D, and also from E to F, would show that several of the objects are on precisely the same level, and again, that they are perpendicularly over each other. For instance, in Example 3, the church in the distance is over the man in the foreground, who thus appears to be supporting it on his head; the apex of the mountain is just above the spire of the church; and the castle on the hill is immediately over the bridge: each important feature of the distance surmounting another important feature of the fore-ground, all idea of space between the fore and the back-ground is, in consequence, negatived. As the artificial boundaries of the picture are thus emphasised and repeated, the flat surface is so continually suggested, that the mind cannot free itself from it. If light and shade only were expressive of space, each of the four examples would suggest the idea of it equally. We, however, fail to obtain in Examples 3 and 4 the same idea of space as in the examples above them, although all have like advantages in other respects. The most untutored eyes may perceive that their effect is very different, though there has been no change in the features of the scenes, excepting such as was necessary to show the force of what I have brought before the student. Examples 1 and 2 are pleasing, varied and spacious; 3 and 4 are bad, because monotonous and flat. Their comparative merits or defects are entirely owing to the composition.

We may take another illustration from Examples 2 and 3, Plate 11. In Example 2 the castle is so placed as to come immediately over the basket which the woman carries; and notwithstanding that the castle is faintly drawn and small in size in order to suggest the idea of distance, yet the contradiction given to it by faulty composition prevents it being entertained by the mind The castle being immediately over the figure is suggestive rather of the flat surface of a *picture* than of the permeable space of *reality;* but if we hide the castle, we then lose the impression of flatness, and in its stead receive the idea that we could walk round the figure. Compare this with Example 3, where the castle is removed to the right; here we have the full expression of space, and if we hide the castle, far from receiving, in this instance as in the other, any additional idea of space, we lose it greatly by so doing.

It must be observed that this principle of placing the objects on different lines is not gained from a study or imitation of Nature, but from an investigation of impressions made by Art. Both the Examples are equally true imitations of Nature as well in the objects themselves as in their juxta-position.

To feel the force of this principle still more, we must turn to Division A, of Example 1, of the same Plate. All the figures, horses, and trees, might be found in Nature exactly as they are here placed; but when so found they are ill-adapted to pictorial representation; and if so represented, they impede the imagination in its efforts to realise the scene, in consequence of the following defects in their composition. The heads of the two horses in the foreground are exactly level with each other; the back of the one slopes towards the right, the other equally to the left. The heads of the three figures are equidistant,

Ex. 1.

Ex. 2.

Ex. 3.

Ex. 4.

and repeat the line of rising ground beyond them; and this again is repeated by the line of shadow behind the figures. The trees on the hill are exactly over the heads of the figures; and although they differ in intensity of colour and in size, as compared with the figures, they hardly appear more distant; indeed if the space between them and the heads of the figures be for a moment hid by the point of a pencil, they will appear as if actually resting on them.—The falcon which has just taken flight after the heron, is represented at the moment when he is crossing the line of the hill, and the heron when perpendicularly over the head of the lady. Such an arrangement of objects, though aided in light and shade, and colour, by the united efforts of the most distinguished painters the world ever saw, would yet fail to express space in the same degree as it is expressed in Division B, of this Example. In the latter, every error I have enumerated has been avoided: the flat surface of the paper is now lost sight of, and it is impossible to receive from this Example, that impression of flatness which we cannot escape in the other.

The observations which I have made concerning the objects not being level with each other, are not confined to their several heights; they equally apply to the inequality of their ground bases. And although here the differences of level cannot be so great, yet there must be a difference; since, however small, the idea of flatness is thus destroyed, and that of space suggested. We may see this by the roots of the trees in Example 1, Plate 10, and by the places of the feet of the figures and animals in Example 2. To know and feel still more the consequences and value of the difference of level, elevation, and direction, as indicating space, these Examples must be compared with those below them, where the principle has been neglected. Additional proofs are also to be found in the Examples of Plate 11, especially in Example 4, where, because these facts have been observed with regard to the placing of the feet of the horses on the road, and the roots of the trees in the ground to the right, we are sensible of the expression of space. Further evidence is indeed afforded by every Plate contained in this volume, and by every good work of Art, be it what it may.

Of the flatness arising from objects being placed perpendicularly over each other, even where the picture is not limited by the usual horizontal and perpendicular lines, we can have no better proof than may be obtained by comparing the Examples 1 and 2, of Plate 9. In Example 1, the rocks are nearly over each other in a direct line, and although one is made lighter than another, nevertheless the fall is, to our perceptions, perpendicular, or nearly so. Example 2, on the contrary, appears to come from a greater distance, at top, and to be more forward at the bottom; the fall, so far from appearing to come perpendicularly down the ravine which it has worn, the eye perceives, and the mind feels distinctly the various distances of its channel. Here we still have some of the defects of Example 1, though they are less obvious; but in Example 3, where they either do not exist at all, or are scarcely perceptible, we have still greater space,—yards for feet; and in this instance, no idea of flatness is suggested. These Examples may serve to show, that precisely in degree as we avoid those errors in composition, which I have pointed out, so do we advance, step by step, towards the expression of space.

Examples 1* and 2† Plate 12, exhibit such errors in composition. In Example 1, the summit of the mountain is precisely above the principal tower of the castle, and the figures, on the margin of the water, are just under it. In Example 2, the figures on the bridge are surmounted by the larch on the hill beyond, and the two light figures in the foreground have two corresponding stems of trees, in light, directly over them, and they stand precisely on the edge of a shadow. Now, if space could be suggested to the mind in defiance of the principle I have pointed out, then would these two Examples be equal in this respect to those below them; but they are not. It must therefore be admitted, from all I have shown, that this at least is one of the laws of composition, which can never be neglected, without certain failure, more or less great, according to the pictorial value of the objects affected by it.

If these Examples be not enough to warn or convince the student, he may examine with great advantage,—not as a guide to follow, but as a beacon to deter,—the work from which I have taken the Examples 5, 6, 7, and 8, in Plate 6; or he may refer to Claude's Liber Veritatis—"Veritatis!"—where he will find scores of the most absurd mal-associations. Figures, buildings, and trees, half a mile off, or more, riding on the shoulders of figures, and on animals, in the foreground: huge trees which appear to have taken root in the backs of the

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* No. 1. From a drawing by Bolognese, in the British Museum.

† No. 2. "Un grand paysage, par Rembrant, gravé par Bovinet."

Pl. 12.

Ex. 1.

Ex. 2.

Ex. 3.

Ex. 4.

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figures and animals, who it must be admitted bear their heavy burdens most complacently. Figures sometimes jammed head and shoulders into the arches of bridges, far beyond them; others over the centres of the arches, arranged like key-stones, and cattle underneath supporting the piers between their horns; trunks of trees and rocks performing the part of posture-masters to animals and figures, which appear emulous of throwing their bodies into the same forms, and of being identified with them; besides a crowd of other "effects," no less strikingly absurd.

Let the reader who may think these strictures severe, unmerited, or partial, quietly turn over the Liber Veritatis, plate, by plate, with Turner's Liber Studiorum, and having contrasted and compared them one by one, in variety and beauty of composition, in light and shade, in space, graceful form, grandeur, and in every quality of refined art, decide which bears the palm. In the Liber Studiorum there are few, if any, of the errors of composition which I have pointed out; and their almost total absence proves, beyond question, that they have been studiously avoided. Their rare and accidental appearance is the exception which strengthens the rule; whereas in Claude their constant recurrence goes far to prove that he was unacquainted with the right principles of composition. It would be unfair to suppose that these remarks apply to Claude alone; many, if not all the "Old Masters," whether in figures or landscape, have made the same or similar mistakes.* If Claude's works be referred to more frequently than others, it is because everything that he has ever done—and much more, bearing his name, which he never saw—has been set up as the model of Landscape, and so reverently looked on, as if to question its merits were to deny the existence of every beauty real and ideal.

Before I proceed farther on the subject of composition, I would lay great stress on this defect of Claude's, as well as others to which I have alluded—

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* My observations on the defects of the old landscape painters, will be chiefly confined to composition and light and shade; even these I shall limit very much, as the Graduate of Oxford, in his work entitled "Modern Painters, their superiority in the Art of Landscape Painting to the Ancient Masters," has already anticipated me in a most able manner. In endeavouring to award to Turner the pre-eminent commendation so justly due to his talent, it is to be regretted that the writer's admiration should partake so much of the nature of adoration; nevertheless, no work of modern times has made its appearance better calculated to be of use to students and amateurs of Art, or effectually to counterpoise, or clear away, the rubbish of antiquated prejudice, and make a fair field for the exercise and appreciation of talent.

viz., the practice of repeating the forms of objects of any kind, by the forms of others totally dissimilar in their nature,—for this mistaken practice having been found to obtain (accidentally, I believe) among some of the "Old Masters," their works possessing this egregious fault, have been appealed to as evidence of its necessity and value. I am, however, of opinion that, if the "Old Masters" could rise and see these mistakes extolled as merits, they would blush, and blot them out. Repetition of forms has been urged as an especial nostrum for good composition. A breath should be sufficient to dispel this fallacy.

We may here take an example from Claude (The Judgment of Paris). Although this is a tolerably pleasing composition, yet it has several great defects, inasmuch as the temple, on the left, takes precisely the form of the foliage behind and about it; and the trees have not only like forms and like quantities, but their forms are repeated by what is below them and on the foreground; the figures, also, are too nearly on the same level, and the line they form is repeated in the distance beyond. In the example given underneath, I have been so bold as to correct those defects. The trees here have different forms and quantities; the building does not repeat either, but possesses a distinct form of its own, and is therefore instantly recognised by the mind as a separate object; and all the varieties of form which these lines express, instead of being repeated by others below them and on the foreground, are contrasted and emphasized by straight and other opposing lines; the level of the figures is changed, and the distance beyond them does not in this, as in the example above it, follow any line they suggest. I am aware that, in doing this, I am treading on delicate ground; but I am also conscious that those who see with unprejudiced eyes, and who will honestly confess their convictions, must admit that the changes which I have made are improvements, and acknowledge that I have but shown the force of truth.

Nature has given to all objects specific forms, and although they may be found " in sportive mood " occasionally to take each other's shapes, yet their difference in all other respects is so manifest, that we can rarely confound them with the objects whose forms they for a moment assume, and consequently the mind never loses a distinct conception of whatever distinguishes the one from the other. But how widely do circumstances differ when Nature is represented by Art! What are all objects then? What then are clouds, trees, rocks, mountains, figures, &c. &c.? Paint.—Art, in this respect, makes all things alike, and is unable, except in the remotest degree, to imitate the *nature* of things. It is sameness all; and this defect would be fatal, and even insuperable, but for the power which the artist has over his composition, and the forms of his objects. So far, then, is the repetition of forms from being an advantage, that, on the contrary, their marked difference is his sheet-anchor; for, seeing that with him everything is reduced to paint, and that this, of necessity, tends to confuse the mind by presenting to it every variety of Nature by the same material, he relies solely on his control over the variety and distinct difference of forms, at once to impress the mind with clear and distinct ideas.

Repetition of forms in objects, when alike in kind, is almost as great a mistake as their repetition when they differ in kind. We may see something of the truth of this in turning again to Example 1 of Plate 12. The mountain in the middle of the picture is, as nearly as possible, mocked by the other to the right; so that, by having the same object repeated in form and quantity, the attention is not arrested by one more than the other; we are confused between both, and being unable to prefer one to the other, are therefore indifferent to both. The lines on all sides are monotonous—all to the left take one direction, all to the right another—and the lines on the surface of the hills are mocking the outlines. Now, if the repetition of lines or forms were indeed an important principle of Art, and productive of beauty, this example would be greatly superior to Example 3 below it; but it is not so. It must be remembered that I am only speaking of the composition. Nothing but the turgid mystification of Art, deduced from blind reverence for names, could give such obliquity to vision as to induce preference for what deserves no other appellation than worthless, and is too much beneath criticism to attract the notice of any but those whose judgments have been so misguided. This is no rare example; it may be paralleled in a thousand instances. Can the same faults of composition be found in Example 3? Whether this is better or worse than Example 1, I may leave the natural feelings of the reader to determine. They would decide the question rightly; and if they be aided by his judgment, the decision will be beyond dispute.

I remember to have seen a copy, from a picture by Rubens, of a Holy Family, in which there was a friar bending towards the Infant Saviour; over him were seen the sky, and some foliage: the forms of the light clouds were those of the drapery of the monk repeated; and the dark clouds, or darker parts of the sky, repeated the forms of the tree. Sky, drapery, and tree, could only be known to the mind by the difference which a child might mark—by blue, brown, and green. Apart from colour, all would have been confusion; for if they had all been reduced to one colour, as they must be in a print, no mind could overcome the evident contradictions, so as to receive those ideas which it would always naturally associate with each object. The confusion would be still greater were all represented by an outline.

But I will call the student's attention to an example which I have given on the opposite page. In the upper subject he cannot fail instantly to detect how all the lines of the paling, horses, man, and ground, are perpetually following each other, or are coincident; and how the mind is confused and unable to separate each from the other; more especially where the fore leg of the horse to the left, and the hind leg of the horse to the right, so take up each other's lines, as to make it almost impossible to affirm which is which. In the lower subject, we have no faults of this kind; it is precisely the same incident, but with the lines so differently arranged, that the impressions conveyed are distinct, and the mind comprehends all the parts, without an effort. Here repetition of lines has been studiously avoided; and to that cause alone is to be attributed a superiority which all must feel and acknowledge. In the one case, we have sameness, in the other variety.

It should, however, be remembered that this principle must be taken in conjunction with others, yet to be noticed. It is not by the operation of one, but of many laws that we obtain a perfect whole; nor is this principle confined to simple subjects, such as I have given to make myself understood: it equally applies to others of more complicated character and more abundant in incident, as the examples in the various plates may help to prove.

In further confirmation, we may turn to Plate 13, where in Example 1 we find that the lines, indicating the clouds, hills, trees, and rocks, take nearly, if not precisely, the same direction. The distant mountain actually continues the line formed by the tops of the trees, on the bank to the right; the stems of these trees repeat each other in form, and quantity; and the line of the birch on the extreme right is continued by the man driving the sheep, and also by the wall, so that they all but perfectly coincide with each other: in fact, all the lines of all the different objects are so nearly alike, that although they differ widely in their nature, yet in their forms they nearly resemble each other. This scene was taken from Nature; and the sky and figure which I have added, though they so ill accord, are nevertheless perfectly natural.

Let us now turn to Example 2 of Plate 13, in which there are precisely the same objects, and precisely the same arrangement, by which we recognise it to be the same scene. In this, however, each feature has been studied with reference to the others, and such changes and modifications made, as present a change of form with each feature; so that the mind may at once be cognizant of the variety, and derive additional satisfaction from its influence.

The difference between these two subjects cannot fail to convince the reader of the necessity of studying the influence of lines on each other, and that much is required from the skill of the painter to regulate those changes and modifications indispensable to the mental exercise of his art; that whilst he preserves a faithful likeness for the eye, he may offer a beauty to the mind which shall continually tend to enlarge and exalt our ideas of the beauty which there is in Nature. Compare also Examples 2 and 4, Plate 12.

It is in such changes as these that his power is required, shown, and appreciated. It would be as impossible to deny that these two pictures are identically the same subject, as it would be to deny that we feel one representation of it to be preferable to the other, not merely as a picture, but as a graphic representation of Nature; because in addition to the collocation of the various objects by which we may know this scene from any other, we have also impressed forcibly on our minds the conviction of its beauty. Of what value is strict imitation here? May not this serve to show the student that much of what is called a knowledge of Nature is to be found in the study of the impressions she makes on the mind, and of the causes to which they may be ascribed?

When compared with Nature, of whose reality we are so assured that the mind takes instant and certain cognizance of whatever she presents, it is

Pl. 13.

Ex. 1.

Ex. 2.

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obvious that the mimic show of her by Art, with its limited means, even in the ablest hands, is feeble; it must therefore be important to the painter, to cling tenaciously to whatever power he may have over the forms of the objects, or their combination. Though it may happen in Nature that different objects coincide in form, or nearly so, and in her may pass unheeded by the keenest eyes, it is not so in Art. In Nature different objects are universally supposed, and indeed believed, to take different forms; and, in the mind, difference of form is always associated with difference of nature or kind: this in Art must be strictly attended to.

As in a picture every object derives its place and its position, and every figure its attitude and aspect, from the will of the painter, he should take especial care that he does not confuse the mind by giving to different objects proximate forms, or repeat the line or lines of one kind of object, by similar lines in an object essentially different. It requires all the vigilance of keen and long tutored observation, to detect the identity of line, in things dissimilar in kind, which is perpetually insinuating itself, unobserved, into the different forms depicted by the painter, to the consequent loss of the proper influence of every object wherever it happens to be, and sometimes to the production of results which are even ridiculous.

Whether lines be upright, horizontal, zigzag, curved, or undulating, the mind associates different ideas with them: it is manifest that if things opposite in their nature take by chance on canvas the same forms, it is not in the power of the mind to separate the sentiments proper to each, or to disentangle itself so as to connect the proper sentiment to any, in the face of such nullifying contradictions.

All this should awaken the student to the importance and value of a knowledge of composition: he may possess multitudes of beautiful forms gathered from Nature or Art, he may have an inexhaustible imagination; yet without a knowledge of composition, his imagination will be of little worth: and his gatherings from Nature, labour in vain, if by a misapplication of beauties he destroy the beauty of all.

The very essence of Art consists in the contrast of forms, so as to convey to the mind clear and distinct ideas, and to suggest different qualities, and different size as affected by space, in every part of the picture, where all are viewed in connexion with those around and with the whole subject, each part being fitted, adapted, and related to the others, and all together. Though each object may be found complete in itself, and the mind may dwell on it with satisfaction, yet more pleasure is imparted in its adaptation to the other parts; because, by that adaptation, qualities are expressed with more power than in objects singly, and even such as cannot otherwise be expressed at all.

For a still stronger confirmation of the principle that one object, or one feature of interest, must not be placed perpendicularly over or under another, I refer the student to Plate 14. As it is a given subject—a view from Nature—and composed of objects whose forms would be readily recognised by those who know the scene, they must, therefore, be strictly true in kind and relation; not so, however, the figures, except in costume; these are left to the will of the artist, and we can now examine how far the observance of this principle operates to assist him.

Take, first, the leading features—those which come against the sky, and strike at the first glance; the church, and the two turrets right and left of it, seen over the roofs of the houses, and also the most prominent gables. If the eye be allowed to travel down the surface of the picture, it will be found that there is no object of remarkable interest under any of them, and that the figures, and objects of interest in the street, have been so arranged, as to occupy the spaces between these marked features, and that the figures themselves have also been thus arranged in relation to each other: as, for instance, the man and cart in the distance are placed over the space between the heads of the centre group of figures in the foreground. It will also be observed, that this the *principal* group is made to occupy precisely that portion of the scene which, of itself, that is, without aid from extraneous features, would possess no interest; for if a slip were cut out between AA and BB, no object of importance would be removed; hence, then, this is unquestionably the proper and only place for the principal group. It will also be perceived, that these figures are so placed, that neither their heads nor their feet are on a level; for what has been said, in page 61, of the principal features, is equally true of the subordinate, equally applicable, and attended with a like result—the expression of space. It will also be found that these groups, like all the other features constituting the pictorial beauty of the scene, are of different form and quantities. Now, if

Pl. H.

Treves,

on the Moselle

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these principles be true, it should then be difficult to make any change in contravention of them, without damage, by removing any of the figures or objects; or when applying them to discover if the composition be perfect or not, then, it should be impossible that any change in conformity with them should not make the picture better. Let the student think and try; for he is not to take these things on trust: conviction of their truth and utility must come from reason and experience.

Beside the advantage to be derived from placing the objects so that they shall not be perpendicularly over each other, there is yet another, of prime importance, to which a knowledge of this principle leads,—namely, the occupation of every portion of the picture by some object of interest or pictorial value. It frequently happens that strips from the top to the bottom of the picture might be cut out, without removing one feature of interest in it. This may be done in examples 2 and 4, of Pl. 10, between AA and BB, GG and DD, without taking away an object of the slightest interest; and the same might be done with examples 1 and 2, Pl. 12; not so however, with examples 3 and 4. In these, if the eye be allowed to run up and down, it will always be arrested by some pleasing or interesting object in some part of the picture; and this observation applies with equal force to the examples 1 and 3 of Pl. 10.

In the works of the ancient masters, and in none more remarkably than in those of Claude, this defect frequently occurs; and in the following page I have given an example from one of his works: it is a subject in which he introduces himself, sketching some ruins on the banks of the Tiber. Here between *bb* and *cc* there is a large space without a single object to claim attention; indeed all that portion of the picture between *aa* and *cc*—full half of the entire surface—possesses but a few trifling features, and even those, instead of being made prominent—are almost obscured by the light and shade, in the objects around them; whilst the principal and most interesting are arranged on each side, right and left. Thus the most important part of the picture is all but a blank; the composition poor and ill adapted to bring out the resources of art, or compensate for its weakness. Here we have also another proof of the error of placing the chief objects on the same level; and here the error will be rendered more conspicuous by hiding the lower part of the subject, when both the tree on the right, and the building on the left, will inevitably appear on the same plane; although, judging of their position by the ground, it is evident that they are intended to be understood as at different distances from the spectator. The horizon also is half way up the picture (a very common fault of Claude), dividing it into equal portions or quantities; an inevitable consequence of this is, that the upper and lower lines of the buildings, on the left, slope at equal angles towards the vanishing point. All those defects I have taken the liberty to remedy in the example below, following out those principles which I have referred to, and which it is my object to develope. When these two examples are compared with each other, part by part, and altogether, I think the student will have no difficulty in deciding whether truth and error have been fairly presented to him. But we may go a step further, and compare Claude with himself, by examining the upper subject on this page with that from his picture of the Judgment of Paris, at page 66. In the latter, the surface of the picture is better occupied with features of interest; and I think few will deny it to be the most pleasing composition of the two.

It would be scarcely necessary to point out, how desirable it is that the principal object, of whatever kind, should generally occupy a position *near* the centre of the picture, except for the sake of showing the reasons why. In the first place, we are always supposed to direct the principal visual ray to the principal object; and thus, whatever may be the accompaniments or accessaries, equal portions on each side of the principal object will fall on the eye, and enable it to estimate the influence it derives from their association. If, however, the principal feature be *exactly* in the centre of the picture, it must of necessity have *equal* quantities of space on each side of it, to be filled by the subordinate features; and thus a difficulty is created, which even an ingenuity the most fertile in appliances cannot easily overcome.

The mistake of placing the chief object or feature exactly in the centre may be understood by reference to Ex. 1, Pl. 12, where the castle has this position —is uniform in itself, and has the landscape on each side of it equal and similar—so that if a line were drawn down the middle, at AA, one half would be found greatly to resemble the other half. Contrast this with Ex. 3, where, though the castle occupies precisely the same position, yet the eye does not so easily detect this, on account of its attention being drawn to the left by objects which lend an additional interest, and vary the two sides of the picture.

If, again, the chief object be placed too near the side, the chances are that its attraction will be neutralised by the greater quantity of objects which fill up the larger portion of the picture. On the other hand, were this large space occupied with but few features, and those of little interest, the attractions of the principal object would so preponderate, as to make it appear that more surface had been employed than the subject demanded. This is what is generally understood as the "balance of a composition," a phrase which, whatever it may express, simply means that the interest of the picture should be generally diffused (yet always in subordination to the chief feature), and the canvas or paper so well filled, that more shall not appear to have been employed than was actually required.

For the more perfect comprehension of what is meant by the "balance of a composition" (a phrase often used without being by any means as often understood, except by artists), we must turn to Pl. 17, where the principal feature, which is dignified, important, and striking in itself, derives additional consequence from its commanding position amidst beautiful scenery. The charms of each are reciprocated by the association; hence the impressions the mind receives from them separately and in connexion, must be wrought out on the canvas. The castle, however, which gives name to the view, is unfavourably placed as regards the construction of the picture, being unavoidably far up in the corner, to the left; and were it not for the incidental interest derived from the boats and raft, more than half the picture would be little better than a blank; but taking advantage of those features and incidents peculiar to the scene, and introducing them in conformity with those principles which, by this time, I may fairly suppose the reader to be acquainted with, not only is the whole more complete as a picture, but the scene and its associations are brought home to the mind. I must refer also to Ex. 1, Plate 10, where we shall find that one-half, BB, is richer in subject than AA; and were it not for the interest gained by the figures in the foreground on the left, and the church beyond them, all space to the left of AA would have been unnecessary to the picture.

It is, then, always better, that the principal object, whatever it be, which gives name to the picture or is to claim the chief attention,—whether the hero of a story, or the most important feature of a landscape,—should be placed in the most conspicuous position, which is near the middle of the picture. A little attention to the examples which I have given, in Pl. 10, will make what I mean understood. By the centre of the picture, I do not mean the point where lines drawn from the opposite corners would intersect each other, but any point, which would be equally distant from the sides, though unequally from top and bottom. In Ex. 1 of Pl. 10, the centre of the picture is occupied by a group of trees which, from their size and place, naturally call attention to them, although they are not the chief features, and are merely accessories to the castle on the hill, which marks the scene, and was the temptation to depict it; they become, however, from their situation in the picture, very conspicuous; and the castle, but for its being the brightest object, would have been as much overwhelmed by them, as it is set aside. Now, if attention had not been bestowed on the forms of these trees, so as to make them in some degree worthy of the post of honour, all ideas of a beautiful scene would have been lost, and the subject would have been reduced to one of mere commonplace. As a proof of this being the consequent result, we have only to look at Ex. 2 of this plate: joined to this we have another defect, for by alternately hiding with a piece of paper all to the left of A A, in Ex. 1, or all to the right of B B, we shall find we have two complete pictures. It must be distinctly remembered that we are dealing only with the composition, irrespective of the light and shade; for, in the latter respect, all those examples are alike; and they have been purposely made so in order to prove that nothing can compensate for defective composition; for if anything could, then should all these examples of Pl. 10 be equally pleasing and satisfactory. Whether their merits be equal, I leave the reader to determine.

In Ex. 3 of Pl. 10, the abbey, which is the most important, and also the most conspicuous feature, takes up a large space, and a prominent position near the centre of the picture; whilst in the precise centre there is not a feature of any kind, because it *is* the precise centre,—it is almost a blank around which all the other features of the scene, trees, houses, and figures are arranged. If we now turn to Ex. 1 of this plate, we shall find that the centre, or mid-space, equidistant from the sides of the picture—not at the same time the centre between the top and bottom,—is occupied by the tree, and the house on the bridge. The centre of Ex. 2, Pl. 1, derives interest and point from the peep through the trees; Pl. 14, by the figures and church; Pl. 16, by the town in the distance, and the figure below it. The same may be observed of all the examples given in the various plates.

We must now return to the consideration of SPACE, or the impression of it, which the flat surface that the painter works on, as we have already seen, is constantly denying.

Space and light are, in painting, amongst the grandest objects of achievement; to the expression of the former—permeable, infinite space—the flat surface of the picture presents the greatest obstacle; and to express effulgent, dazzling, unsubstantial light, we have to contend with ponderous and material pigments. To achieve the expression of those most essential requisites, individual imitation could do nothing—absolutely nothing; for we have neither space nor light to avail ourselves of,—we can but feebly suggest either: yet so important are they to every picture, that however dignified the subject, or however in all other respects ably treated, the obtrusive evidence of paint for light, and surface for space, would, without other appliances, defeat and defy the exercise of the noblest powers. We should be at once chilled by manifestations of poverty in the materials of Art, and their contradictions to the actuality of Nature. The first steps towards the expression of space must be made in composition.

It is, therefore, indispensable, that the near objects in the foreground be brought in immediate opposition to those most distant, so that by the abruptness of the change in size, proportion, colour, and distinctness, the idea of space may be suggested, to account for such differences as may be seen in Part B, Ex. 1, and Ex. 4. Pl. 11., and also in Ex. 4, Pl. 12. This, it is true, cannot always be done, as the nature of the subject will not always admit of it; but where it is by any means practicable, it should continually be aimed at. Some considerable interval should lie between all the principal features. Without the assistance which art derives from such means towards the expression of space, it would be almost in vain to attempt it by regular gradation alone, except in architectural subjects, where the gradual diminution of regular forms, by perspective, favours the attempt; as in the buildings on each side of the street in Pl. 14. To understand more fully what is here meant, it will be desirable to turn to the various completed examples which I have given; and wherever this contrast of near and remote objects is found, there will be felt the greatest expression of space, so far as this could be effected by the placing of the objects.

Even in composition we have, at best, but limited means for the expression of space; 1st, by the different heights of each striking object, and taking care not to place them over or under each other, nor the subordinate on a level, as I have shown in Plates 10, 11, and 14; 2nd, by the opposition of distance more or less abrupt; and, 3rd, by the feebler means of gradual diminution. For the amplitude of space, we must rely on light and shade, and colour; and this must ever be borne in mind as a point of first-rate necessity, in order that we may prepare in our composition for their effective introduction. Light and shade, and colour are but feeble auxiliaries, unless opportunities be previously devised in the composition for their co-operation and powerful display: but I defer the consideration of these means to their respective chapters.

Variety in composition is also another feature of first-rate consequence; for if variety be essential to the beauty of objects individually, it is of yet greater importance to seek it in their collocation, in order to obtain a rich assemblage of forms and colours, quantities and qualities, action and repose, which shall by their effective opposition give lustre to each other.

Sir J. Reynolds, in his eighth Discourse, says, "that variety can never be the groundwork of a performance." Though owing all respectful deference to such high authority, yet, seeing that the unmistakable attribute of Nature is variety,—infinite variety,—I am compelled to assert that it is therefore *most important* to Art. In the same discourse Sir Joshua, oddly enough, introduces proof after proof of its necessity; directs that in the management of the composition, the figures should be continually contrasted, "one figure opposing the front, the other the back; the limbs of each to be contrasted; and if the right arm be drawn back, the left shoulder should be put forward;" and thus he contradicts himself, by making variety a leading feature, and recommending it as the first step in the composition of a picture. He admits, also, that variety is infinite; and goes on to observe, "that lights and shades, and figures in masses and groups, must be properly varied." And again, "that to a certain quantity of action, a certain quantity of space, of plain flat ground is required," &c., &c. He seems to confuse the reader by associating variety with distraction; and probably it was that amount of it which he deprecated. Variety of action and of passion, the peculiar and striking characteristic of Man, is far removed from the disturbance of contortion, or the wearisome monotony of inaction: neither of the latter states is natural, nor are they agreeable; while variety, formed by a juxtaposition of opposite qualities, almost universally pleases, both in Nature and in Art.

It has already been shown that variety is not only an essential property of beauty, but also of the picturesque,—a term which I use as significative of that quality of objects which renders them more peculiarly capable of being effectively and agreeably represented by Art.

The difference between the beautiful and the picturesque, though strongly marked, cannot be very distinctly expressed by words. The refined, chaste, and classical features of Greek architecture are beautiful simply: the wildness of nature is picturesque simply. The Greek ruin is both beautiful and picturesque, because it has mixed up with its refined beauty the irregularity and variety of the picturesque.

It is more essential that objects should be varied when in combination than individually, on account of their influence on each other when represented on a flat surface, and within the precisely-defined limits of a picture. They require to be varied in form, in direction and in quantity, and ought never to be repeated, in all these respects, in the same subject; and as opposites set off each other, so action should be contrasted by repose, the round with the angular, the rugged with the smooth, the flexible with the firm, the curved with the straight, and the regular with the irregular. Such contrasts of lines, quantities, and forms, are, by their influence on each other, the measure of each other's beauty, or pictorial value. It is in the same way that colours and lights and shades affect each other by contrast. But of these in their proper place.

An upright or horizontal line possesses in itself no beauty, yet its presence is of great value in a picture as a test of the curvature or inclination of others, as we see in Pl. 16 and 17, and in the Examples 2 and 5 of Pl. 24, where the rugged lines of the mountains and distance derive their influence from the unbroken line of the horizon; and we feel the charms of such scenery greatly increased when we have the smooth horizontal surface of the river or lake, to reflect and contrast the wild outlines and surfaces of its mountainous and rocky shores. Hence it is we derive so much more pleasure when among mountains with lakes cradled at their bases, or from the cliff-bounded sea-shore, than we can possibly experience in the absence of such contrasts. In the example of trees given in the present page, each line being different to

Pl 15

Ex. 1

Ex. 2

17.16.

Near Feldkirk, Tyrol.

Drawn & Engraved by J. [illegible]

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the others, strengthens and gives value, by opposition, to the effect of each. We are indebted for any pleasure they afford to the presence of variety—no two lines are alike—no two quantities are equal—each tree is different in its kind, and therefore in its form, and the group has been selected from nature on account of that variety. It is to this influence which lines have on each other, whether upright or horizontal, curved or inclined, that we are indebted for the pleasure we derive from the combination of buildings with natural scenery; above all, when the buildings are either Grecian, or when, in the same manner as Grecian, they furnish perpendicular and horizontal lines, in marked contrast with any scenery by which they may be surrounded, and with which they have been for the most part associated in nature. In the absence of such features, we feel grateful for the perpendicular surface of the rock, or the sudden acclivity of the mountain side, which always enhance the pleasure we derive from their associated beauties, because we have those beauties enforced by the contrast.

The motion of the man dancing, in the annexed example, from Watteau, would not be so forcibly felt, were it not for the upright and tranquil figure of the woman: were we to hide her, we should be less sensible of his motion, for want of the contrast which gives emphasis to it.*

This mutual influence is, if possible, even more important in the qualities of objects. In a picture, the hard or soft, flexible or firm, or any other opposite

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* These figures are from Watteau, who, in his way, was master of great variety in grouping his figures, and appeared to know the value of it in that respect; not however as a universal principle, for his draperies, by the flutter of their multitudinous folds, and ever recurring lights and shades of equal quantities, distract the mind and weary the eye, and often present such fantastic forms as even a cold imagination might resolve into shapes widely different from any which the mind associates with drapery.

qualities, cannot be actually given; there, individual imitation is powerless. Art can only suggest to the mind ideas of such qualities,—which, be it observed, are a very essential part of the likeness,—and it effects this chiefly by contrast. Of this we may form some idea by examining the examples of Pl. 13, where the rocks and water oppose each other's qualities; where the hardness and opacity of the one are contrasted by the fluidity and transparency of the other; where the light and pliant birch is contrasted by the massive foliage of the other trees, and these by the angular rocks and hills, and these again by the water and the sky, all operating to force on the mind, by their associated opposition, impressions it could never otherwise receive.—Examine the contrast of qualities in all the other completed examples.

The value of this kind of contrast, as an additional means of suggesting to the mind the idea of different qualities, cannot be better exemplified than in engraving, where it is an important resource and compensation for the absence of colour. The different means employed on the various objects, so as to excite strongly every sensation connected with each, must be familiar to all persons; if not, the examination of the several engraved examples in this work may suffice. In them I have availed myself of the various modes of engraving known—line, mezzotint, and aquatint, in combination—so that I might derive from each, what each could afford towards an efficient appeal to the mind. The application, in this respect, of the means of Art,—varying, of course, according to the nature of the objects pourtrayed, or the ideas naturally associated with them, whether in painting, sculpture, or engraving,—depends on the artist's ingenuity and the susceptibility of his feelings. By such means he produces what is technically called "texture," or quality, meaning, that by such contrivances the texture or quality of an object is expressed: and we call it beautiful, in proportion as we acknowledge the talent of the artist in availing himself of those means to add strength to the sentiments or ideas he is dealing with.

The advantage of contrasts, in another way, will be evident on comparing examples in 1 and 2, Pl. 12. Both 1 and 2 are done solely by aquatint; and as we find the same quality pervading every part of both pictures, we can scarcely be persuaded that one thing is nearer than another,—all appear flat, smooth, and monotonous. In the examples 2 and 3 however, means of various kinds have been taken advantage of, to assist the mind in its conceptions of what is near or remote, lucid or opaque, &c., &c., and thus to impress it with ideas of space in one case, and difference of "quality" in another.

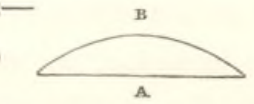
Now in this case, if nothing short of actual imitation would suffice, then, as there are no lines in nature, examples 1 and 2 would be the most satisfactory, because, in this respect, the direct imitation of nature is closer than in examples 3 and 4. In the latter we have lines in all directions, in marked contradiction of the truth of nature; but as the object to be accomplished in these was a more worthy one than direct imitation, we may abandon the latter for the sake of the higher attainment of mental impressions. Looking rather to the sensations we derive from their employment, we can afford to adopt means which, if measured by the test of direct likeness, would be pronounced false, as indeed they are.

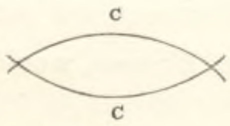
For power in this respect the works of Mr. Edwin Landseer are unequalled; and the graphic "translations" from them by Cousins, T. Landseer, and others, are, for texture and quality, the most striking examples the student can have. We are made to feel the nicest shades of difference in the covering of the animals, from a silky, glossy coat, to a bristly and wiry one, as in "Laying down the Law." His animals are all warm with life. One feels quite anxious to pass the hand over the sleek coat of his well-groomed horses; and by anticipation we experience the sensation so familiar to us. The dogs in the street, or anywhere else, are but his pictures come to life. We get entangled in the heather amongst which his wounded deer has fallen; we hardly dare trust ourselves on the wet, mossy, and slippery rock; we hear the noise of the stream struggling to force its way through all impediments—rocks, grass, and heather; and we pity the poor animal whose body already shows the flaccidity of death. It is quite difficult to restrain the wish one has to purloin all the minor accessories of his works—gloves, hats, boots, spurs, armour, &c. &c. In short, Nature's impressions, and those we experience from his works, are nearly identical.

From these instances the student may see that lines and forms, and more especially quantities and qualities, are dependent for expression on their contrast with each other.

We have already seen that, individually, objects are rarely, if ever, found perfectly beautiful of any kind; and that Nature is not more prodigal of perfection in their association. It perpetually happens that the mean are associated with the grand, or that the grand require either change in objects associated with them, or the introduction of such as shall increase their interest or appropriate expression.

Lines as opposed to each other in composition resolve themselves into the following simple arrangement:—



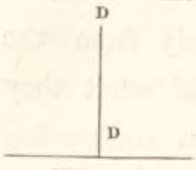
The precise curvature or motion of the line B is not so decidedly felt till it is opposed either by a straight line A, or another curved line in a contrary direction, as— 

or as 

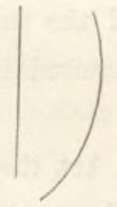
We may see the effect of this by reference to the annexed example, where the distant mountains are contrasted by the nearer hills and the valley below, which oppose lines in contrary directions. Hence, the mountain in the distance acquires magnitude; and its merits in form are not deteriorated by repetition in other objects of less consequence. It is not necessary that the lines should be continuous, as in this case; the same principle equally applies when the objects are detached, as in the lower example, where contrasting lines are suggested which the eye may immediately seize on. Where departure from this principle or any other is more subtle, it is the more necessary for the artist to have keener perceptions, that he may trace all these delicate departures from truth, which are unseen by eyes

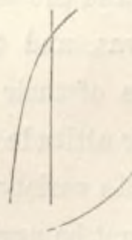
less vigilant than his own, and gain distinction by his ability to carry his production beyond what is simply good, to what is excellent.

Lines which are perpendicular to each other, as D D, are best calculated, in consequence of the positive contrast they afford, to be most effective when employed on the chief features. This may be a reason why a standing figure is always the most imposing.



What is here meant may be better understood as regards figures by reference to the annexed examples; where underneath each is placed a diagram of the simple lines they resolve themselves into, thus showing how they are contrasted, and that it is by such contrast the picture is properly constructed. It is only when the objects composing the picture can be seen in this their elementary state, that an opinion can be formed whether any new features are required, what form they should take or possess so as to produce lines which shall add to the variety, and therefore to the interest and beauty of the picture: reference to the Examples on pages 80 and 81 will show that the same simple principle which is operative in rendering the trees pleasing, has served to guide us in subjects of figures which differ so widely from Landscape and its consti-





tuents; and at the same time we learn that, however in their nature the subjects of pictures may vary, we seek and obtain pleasure from the same causes operating universally.

Those painters of figures and sculptors, who work solely from the suggestions of their imaginations, must lay the foundation of what they do in a preconception of some simple arrangement of lines contrasting each other; the emphasis given to some lines, while others are weakened or neutralised; the changes in their influence, thus within the control of the artists, must ever be watched with a jealous eye. Where the subject is drawn from Nature, there is still much for the artist to supply, even when she is most profuse in her display of beauty; and it is only when he has studied the hues and forms which Nature has supplied, that he can know what may be added with certainty to enhance their beauty and complete the effect of his work on the feelings of the spectator.

The effect of opposition is more distinctly perceived in a picture than in Nature; for, in consequence of all the objects inclosed within its definite bounds being received on the retina at the same time, their several relations are thus rendered more conspicuous.

A knowledge of the chief principles of composition is derived rather from a study of the means and capabilities of Art, than from the mere practice of drawing from Nature. There, the scale being so large, the objects admitted by the eye at one view are few in number; and as all that the painter might wish to include in his picture cannot be distinctly seen and individualised at one and the same moment, it is not until the different objects are placed on the canvas, and thus brought at once under the eye, that he can feel the full force of their several relations, or judge whether any change be required in their attitude or situation.

As variety, then, is based on Nature, and as contrast is requisite in Art, they cannot be neglected without weakening the effect of Art on the mind. If this necessity for variety and contrast be felt by the artist, he will be careful to carry them out to the degree necessary to the expression of the sentiment proper to his subject. To attempt to give rules for their precise amount in each work of Art would be as useless as it would be absurd. This must depend on the artist himself, who, knowing that they are indispensable, must necessarily be guided and influenced, in his employment of them, by his own feelings. If these be affected, he may be tolerably sure of reaching the feelings of others; and, if he act on a sound judgment, and a knowledge of the principles of Nature and the necessities of Art, there can be little doubt but his work will be appreciated, by the intelligent, according to its merits.

Though variety and contrast must be with the student a grand aim in the pictorial representation of Nature, yet the amount must be in relation to the subject, and the sentiments proper to it. Variety for the sake of variety would indeed be distraction; and as that is not an agreeable sensation or feeling, the artist will stop short of this if he have judgment; though in terrible subjects, such as the Descent into Hell, the artist may introduce this excess of variety as appropriate and indispensable; but the more he crowds his canvas the more vigilant must he be, because he is then more liable to repeat forms or quantities.

I have taken the more notice of this, because I believe variety to be one of the most obvious, essential, and teachable characteristics of Art; and if I have been successful in explaining myself, and if the reader shall have fairly examined all the illustrations I have given in evidence, I think he will be as firmly convinced as I am of its importance. Had Sir J. Reynolds admitted what I believe to be established by reason and nature, and what he actually adopted in practice, the world might have had, instead of my illustrations of the use and value of variety, the superior advantage of his.

In the senate, or the tribunal of justice, repose, silence, attention, and awe, are the sentiments generally considered appropriate: yet in a picture of such a scene, variety is still necessary; otherwise, we should merely gaze with indifference on a dull, spiritless, and monotonous crowd of figures. As the senate and court of justice offer comparatively so few opportunities for variety, it is perhaps on this account that they are so rarely depicted. The tumult of the battle-field, which would require the wild extravagance of variety, is not therefore more pleasing, and is also rarely painted. Scenes of horror, which excite our feelings and sympathies to a painful degree, and rouse the passions in conflicting and tumultuous excess, as well as those presenting inertness, barrenness, or monotony, are all equally at variance with pleasurable sensations.

These observations apply in like manner to landscape. In a view of London for example, from the Thames, we should require a large amount of variety to express the activity and bustle of commerce, the incessant passing and repassing of men and things, where all is restless: and it is still variety, though in a much less degree, which is necessary in the portraiture of

"The far winding of the peaceful vale."

The search for the effects producible from contrasts of all kinds, so as to enrich the effect of the whole picture, keeps the faculties on the alert; each part being connected with and adapted to the rest, so as to express the full force of the student's intention; but if he neglect this, to give his attention to the parts separately, any more than in assigning to each its proper place and due relative value, he will fail; because he will have laboured to gratify the curiosity, instead of appealing to the judgment and imagination; just as the writer would fail, who, in the characters necessary to his story, should labour to describe individuals in every minute particular, to the neglect of their importance to its general interest.

When the Student has acquired a knowledge of that nice adjustment of parts, which I have endeavoured to explain, and of other rules of Art which I have yet to put before him, and when, from a diligent practice, he has become expert, he will convey his intentions with scarcely a perceptible effort, and will be able to express them in such a manner, even in a sketch, as to show his power, and to claim attention: the mind will everywhere have been engaged, and will everywhere leave its impress. Although excellence in technical arrangement cannot be considered as a certain proof of the highest order of Art, yet the display of it by a master, in the construction of a picture, not only gives pleasure in itself, but also enhances the beauty and pictorial value of every object.

In historical composition, the painter has no likeness of associated objects to give,—they must owe their existence to his invention; the likeness by direct imitation is here again out of the question; and in landscape so entirely does the composition depend on the position from which it is chosen, as well as on the invention of the painter, in supplying what nature has omitted,—and she always leaves something for him to do—that individual imitation is equally at fault here, or nearly so.

Frederickstein
on the Rhine.

Drawn & Engraved by J. D. Harding

Published by Chapman and Hall.

Besides all that has been said respecting variety of form, there must also be variety of quantity. Monotony, the result of repetition, can neither be beautiful nor picturesque; for however varied the objects may be in themselves with respect to form or position, they may yet be alike in quantity, and when this is the case, they fail to please. If we turn again to Plate 17, we shall there find that the objects all differ in kind, form and quantity, and this difference is the more necessary, because the picture is composed of objects which are separate and distinct from each other, and not combined as they are in Plates 10 and 12, 13 and 14. These observations become even more important when applied to figures and animals, and especially so in pictures where the student is left to the unconstrained exercise of his own imagination. Were he not to submit the creations of his fancy to the examinations, and corrections of his judgment, founded on sound principles, he would more frequently fail than succeed in embodying them: he would be in perpetual danger of giving similar attitudes to his figures, like directions to the limbs, or of repeating their lines in the draperies. Figures differing in action, and attitude, would resemble each other in quantity, and accessories would be found to imitate the principal features. The richest imagination is, indeed, so liable to run into a similar train of thought, or to express itself by similar lines and forms, that it requires the greatest vigilance to detect those delicate departures from truthful variety which lie mixed up with what is even the nearest to perfection.

As variety of form, quantity, and quality, is so essential to the composition, I might say construction of works of Art of every class and kind, it becomes interesting to inquire what is most likely to lead to and secure it. Our safest guide unquestionably is simplicity (whenever the nature of the subject will admit of it). By simplicity, I mean where the parts are few and beautiful; not few and non-attractive,—this would be insipidity. Where the parts are few in number, there is less danger of repetition either in form or quantity. Repetition of *lines* and *forms* of the *same kind of objects* is sometimes, though rarely, attended with advantage, where the idea of repose and calm is required. The student must judge for himself whether the sentiment he would express be "the grave or gay,"—"the lively or severe." How tranquil is the sentiment of evening's drowsy quiet, when the motionless clouds, stretched out at rest, and displaying on their edges and between their strata, lines of golden fringe, seem gathered together in the ocean of space, to wait in calm repose the "breezy call of morn;" and how greatly is this sentiment enhanced by their contrast with the hard, rugged, and broken forms of the rocky cliff, surmounted by the castle; the irregular clump of trees, and the valley already touched with the gloom of night; but how different is the sentiment when the breath of morning rouses the slumbering clouds, disperses their masses, and scatters them through the blue expanse, in shapes of ever-changing form, and incessant motion.

All the observations I have made, apply with equal force both to historical and domestic compositions, as well as to landscape. The former, though not supposed to be taken directly from Nature, are yet expected to be as faithfully like as if they had been so taken. So far, therefore, as composition is concerned, everything depends on the student himself; and his work will be pleasing or repulsive, varied or monotonous, according as he succeeds or fails in carrying out those principles on which it has been so far shown that his composition depends.

The liberty to change the form of objects, is limited with respect to the principal features of a landscape; and often no change is admissible in such as give name or distinctive character to it, especially in architectural features of any kind. But as natural features frequently have not distinct and remarkable forms, and are not so easily remembered, even by the painter himself for any considerable time after he has quitted the spot, he must therefore apply himself to their adaptation to his picture in the first place, and next to the portraiture of those more peculiar, and striking characteristics or accidents which even superficial observers do not fail to notice. Those who recollect the scene, usually decide upon the correctness of the general representation rather from some individual objects, than from the identity of their arrangement; and thus the picture is pronounced to be good or bad, correct or incorrect, accordingly as those objects may have affected the feelings, or been impressed on the memory.

Changes or alterations made in the principal features of a picture, ought not to alter the likeness, so far as to prevent clear recognition. A change made in perfect conformity with the nature of the subject, and serving not only to set it clearly before the spectator, but to give a higher idea of it, is not only admissible, but desirable; and when done, in regard and subjection to its distinctive character, increases the sense of beauty without the sacrifice of propriety or likeness. Indeed, this kind of alteration is all but imperative in landscape, which always includes in association with the chief features many others of little or no beauty, and such as leave no permanent impression on the mind or memory, except as regards their relative situations; such as rocks, trees, &c.,—as in the Examples Plate 13,—which, but for some peculiarity in assemblage, the painter would scarcely recollect the day after he had visited the spot. He must therefore attend to their adaptation in the first place, and to their possession of those properties which produced an effect on his feelings; and as he judges by another standard than individual likeness, he must be prepared to impart that kind of pleasure which, it is evident, is not derived from exact imitation.

For proof of what I have explained in the foregoing pages we may turn to Ex. 2 of Plate 12. I assume this scene to have been drawn from Nature:—and we sometimes, though rarely, see such monstrosities in Nature.—Here, the objects individually, so far from being above the common-place, are positively ugly,—they are, however, pleasingly associated. This association has been taken advantage of in Example 4, and changes in conformity with the principles I have enunciated have been made. A comparison of the two pictures will, I think, leave no doubt of the truth of those principles. In the one we are repulsed by every line and form,—there is not a single sensation common to both. Do we hesitate to pronounce accordingly? Can we fail to feel which is most probably like Nature—most *probably* do I say—most *certainly* like Nature? and that the result is owing to the operation of those principles which I have expounded, although, perhaps, but feebly?

Identity in the situations of objects in a composition, except in relation to each other, is not only less required than their actual form, but often less desirable. This applies with marked force to the foregrounds of landscape, composed for the most part of living and moveable objects, which perpetually shifting their places and attitudes, present varieties and changes which, as no memory could retain, so no memory could require. Hence, then, with respect to the accessories, it is clearly more important for the true end of

Art, that we give to the objects such situations, as will best aid us in directly reaching the feelings, rather than in awakening feeble recollections. It is to be observed, that I speak here of accessories, not of the leading features; in these, portraiture is imperative.

Without such a liberty of adapting, as I have noticed, the painter would have no power to work up those beautiful forms he may have toiled to collect, and which, in their isolated situations, may be seized by a prompt hand, guided by a quick and correct eye. He may fill his portfolios to overflowing, and yet be unable, without some guiding principles, to decide which among the immense number is best fitted to his purpose;—he would even be without definite purpose, if, without principles, he should trust to his feelings alone.

It would be impossible to make a pleasing or impressive picture by *filling* it with beautiful objects; some one, and that the principal, should be pre-eminently beautiful of its kind. With this should be associated inferior objects for the sake of contrast, and such beauty in others as, falling short of that of the principal feature, may yet make them worthy of their places. Were the materials for twenty pictures crammed into one, the mind would fail to receive the impression of a whole, because the value of the separate parts distracts and divides its attention, till it can at last hardly feel affected by any. How very often this has occurred in ideal landscapes, wherein Greek temples are raised, pile above pile, in unbounded profusion;—every varied feature of the architecture being in fierce contest for supreme admiration, and all semblance of probability sacrificed for a profuse and ostentatious display.

The moment we depart from the actual, in any degree, we enter in the same degree on the ideal; and it is this which imparts to art its highest quality. It is for this that the student should labour to collect the ten thousand forms and phases of nature, that by adding or suppressing, combining or changing, he may heighten the charms of the actual by those of the intellectual, to complete a comprehensive truth, worthy of Art, and more honourable to himself, as emanating from the mind.

Beauty of individual form, and aggregate beauty, resulting from skilful arrangement and adaptation of beautiful forms, are widely different things.

The ability to appreciate and depict the one by no means includes the power to display the other; correct imitation may be sufficient for the former—the latter emanates from knowledge, judgment, imagination, and feeling.

Beauty in pictorial composition is as superior to individual beauty as a beautiful structure is to any of its parts,—the richest collection of materials amount to little more than a confused and useless heap, unless arranged in graceful order, under the direction of a mind which has previously appointed the appropriate place for each to occupy.

No peculiar or perfect standard of the ideal is here meant to be set up; nothing could be more entirely opposed to the exercise of the imagination, or to that variety which is the charm of Nature, and her inseparable and striking attribute; nor more opposed to the pleasure we experience from the various modes of representing her, adopted by different minds. In a composition, where the objects are effectively displayed by mutual contrast, the transference of any one object to a different part of the same picture, would require a change of form to adapt it to its new situation, and new relations. This exercise continually taxes the invention and resources of the student, and urges him to repair to Nature to obtain new supplies, for endless wants; for new appliances to meet his recurring difficulties, and for fresh examples of that endless variety which can alone keep pace with his emergencies; whilst from her he obtains fresh help, he receives fresh impressions of the beautiful in every shape and phase.

To what can I point as stronger evidence of what the imagination can effect, than many of the ideal landscapes of Turner? Dido Building Carthage, The Fall of Carthage, Dido and Eneas, Tivoli, The Fountain of Fallacy, and many others, in which he has, with the greatest skill, concentrated the richest gems; having exchanged the fetters of the local for the freedom of the ideal, he has wandered at will amongst the beauties of Nature, and having gathered and arranged the choicest, with the purest taste, he has often produced a whole, which Nature herself might envy.

When the student knows how much he is left master of his composition, he ought also to feel how much in like proportion is expected of him; wherever exact resemblance of form or relative position do not confine him, and he enters on the ideal, his object ought to be not to exhibit whimsical conceits, but to depict features having their prototypes in Nature: and those features his imagination is expected to refine from the dross of common-place, and to arrange in such order that each and all may appear as if they actually existed, or had had existence. This is the perfection of ideal landscape. In the assemblage of forms, true to Nature, but true only to her choicest examples, we expand and exalt our own and others' estimate of her charms, because the purified and refined imagination sheds a lustre of its own over beauties which are thus made to adorn each other.

Composition, then, is of the highest importance to the artist, as the field for the exercise of his talent in combining and arranging his objects, so that each may derive an additional charm by association, not belonging to it separately. With all this he must include considerations of the light and shade, and colour; for whilst he assigns to each object its proper place, to develop a beauty arising from one form operating on another—whilst he places the large in opposition to the small, the dignified against the humble, the near opposed to the remote, the flexible against the rigid, lines suggesting motion, and others tranquillity, and the perpendicular against the horizontal—he obtains but a part of the beauty derivable from composition, if he fail to anticipate and prepare for those effects which he must derive from the aid of light and shade and colour.

CHAPTER VI.

LIGHT AND SHADE.

In painting, the compound term light-and-shade,—the "chiaro-scuro" of those who prefer a foreign technical term to one supplied by their own language—simply means, when used with reference to an individual object, that relative degree of light and darkness in the colour, or colours, which causes it to assume the appearance of having the same external qualities of form that it naturally presents to the eye. When used with reference to a group, or groups of objects, it means their comparative lightness or darkness, in relation to the whole picture; and in this, again, the light-and-shade is said to be well managed, where all the parts, having their proper degree of relief, contribute to the production of a good general result.

In the "Elementary Art" I have already cursorily glanced at some of the laws of light and shade, relative to objects individually; and before I enter into their application, with reference to a picture, I must call the student's attention to their effect on objects separately: I shall next endeavour to show how they operate with advantage on an entire subject; and finally what belongs to them only in association.

As in nature we see objects with light and shade always in connexion with their form, it is for that reason extremely difficult to trace their contour, or precise limits; sometimes this separation is strongly marked, at others hardly discernible, so that the imagination is called on to complete the idea, which is but imperfectly conveyed to the mind through the medium of the sight. Mixed and blended as all objects are by light and shade, the detection of their exact forms is not only difficult, but impracticable. The student must therefore be well acquainted with the forms of objects before he can successfully draw them, even by an outline; which, whilst it presents the perfect form, should in some parts mark it emphatically, and in others so indistinctly, as to leave something for the imagination to supply.

Nevertheless, however correct such outline may be, it yet conveys no very definite idea, much less any certain knowledge what is the varied undulation of the surface included within it; and though we may be gratified with so much of the truth as can therewith be represented, we still feel that it is truth alloyed with the defect of an *outline*, showing at all times definite limits, and leaving the light and shade, rotundity, texture, and colour, to the imagination. This is just the reverse of nature, where we are distinctly cognisant of the light and shade, and *surface* of things, rather than of their forms, except when immediately opposed to a bright light behind them, or when violently contrasted in any other way.

Precisely, then, in the same relation as outline stands to the forms of objects, so do light and shade to their surfaces; and as with the latter we attempt to express a greater number of truths than could be expressed by the former, there can be no successful application of the powers of light and shade without a previous knowledge of form. It is only when an object has been viewed, and drawn, from various points, that we become sufficiently acquainted with the great varieties of surface included within its limits, or afforded by each new position; it is only then that we can know what is expressed in nature by all her delicate gradations of surface, and whether portions of it advance or recede, are prominent or indented, concave or rotund; in other words, that we are sensible of the space each object occupies, the nearness or remoteness of whatever is seen of it.

The distinguishing powers of light and shade in art, when effectively employed, are felt in the expression of *surface*, *space* and *light*; for if these be not superadded to the form, we have gained nothing by the introduction of light and shade; the idea of surface may have been suggested by an outline true in all respects, and every one of those truths may have been neutralized or destroyed by ineffective light and shade; or, in other words, light and shade failing to express surface, space, and light.

Form, light and shade, and colour,—although united in nature on every object—and to every combination, and are each of them indispensable, yet are they distinct and separate studies; because the light and shade can never produce any change of form; and colour in like manner cannot make any alteration either in the light and shade or form. For these reasons, and to be clearly understood, each division of Art should be studied separately, as the best method of eventually learning how to unite them, so that each may add to the beauty of the one and the power of the other.

Shade or shadow divides itself into natural and accidental. By the natural shade is meant the shade, inseparable from every solid object on which the light falls; and by the accidental, the shadow or shadows not properly belonging to an object, but which it receives from some other interposing body; as, for example, the shadow of a hat on a face, which *shadow*, as it does not properly belong to the face, would be removed by removing the hat, whilst in all other respects the *shade* natural to the face would remain the same.

Before we proceed further it must be remembered, that although the natural shade, according to the form of the object, may *gently* separate from the light, yet all accidental shadows separate *suddenly* from it, and that these shadows are always the *darkest* in *that part which is in immediate contact with, and in opposition to, the brightest light*, and when *nearest* to the object casting them. As I have before observed, these accidental shadows mark the character of the *surfaces over which they fall*, rather than the forms of the objects whose shadows they are—These are universal laws.

As we have drawn our illustrations of beauty from the human form, we will, for simplicity's sake, return to it for proofs of these facts, and of the necessity for knowing them. In the first place, we will take the shadow which falls from the nose on to the upper lip, and also that which falls from the upper lip on to the lower one. Both these cast shadows have sharp edges, and are darkest in that part immediately against the brightest part of the light; both gradually becoming more tender, and mingling with the natural shade accordingly as the surface turns away from the light. Looking from these to the forehead, where the light is still brighter, we there shall find the hair, or the shadows from it, still *darker*, having a sharp line, and showing the varied contour of the face. If, in the separate features, it be indispensable that the outline should exactly resemble their forms, it is equally indispensable for the truth of the *surface* that the shapes of these shadows, as modified by it, should be equally faithful. True likeness depends as much on the one as on the other; and to add force to these truths it is equally necessary to observe that *the lights are brightest, and the shadows darkest, when in immediate contact.*

If all objects were white, like plaster casts, these truths might be readily discerned by the eye, and would be followed, as they often are, although not recognised as the result of universal laws; but, as these laws affect objects of every variety of colour, their operation is less and less perceptible, and often escapes the keenest sight. From a knowledge of those laws the feelings are rendered more sensitive, and the student becomes a better judge of what constitutes a good work of art, and a less indulgent critic of his own. Without it, he would go to Nature or to high Art in vain—both would be beyond his ken. Before the student can gather instruction from either, or enjoy their beauties, he must be prepared to see and to appreciate them.

That indistinctness of outline which we observe in Nature, is, when represented by Art, what Sir J. Reynolds seems to mean by "fulness of manner," which he says "is so difficult to express in words, but which is found in the works of Correggio and Rembrandt." Whatever may be the difficulty of expressing the *thing* in words, it must be admitted that this term is neither felicitous nor instructive: like many other conventional terms, it conveys no precise idea in reference to Nature; and it is, if possible, more obscure in reference to Art, when Sir Joshua says that "this effect," [this fulness of manner,] "is produced by melting the shadows in a ground still darker than those shadows."

On referring to Nature we shall find, as I have before observed, that we have not the power to see clearly the entire outline of any solid object, more especially of such as are curved; the contemplation of the surfaces in light are consequently forced upon us, and thus we learn from Nature a better lesson on "fulness of manner" than from the works of any painter, ancient or modern, as well as the necessity for avoiding "dryness of manner," which means that hard and distinct outline so entirely at variance with truth.

It continually happens that we are unable to express satisfactorily the degree of rotundity, or the nature of the surface of any object fully, by the natural light and shade. We must then have recourse to the aid of some accidental shadow. Objects in Nature have most commonly irregular and uneven surfaces; consequently, we hardly ever understand what is the form of an object by the form of its cast shadow; but as the shadow naturally follows the undulations and irregularities of the surface on which it falls, it thus assists to put us in complete possession of what we should otherwise see imperfectly. Hence, then, we look to cast shadows as a main auxiliary to express completely the character of the various surfaces on which they fall; bearing in mind, also, that these cast shadows have invariably sharp and well-defined edges, whether the object casting them be round or angular. Apart from the assistance which we derive from these cast shadows, we should have a very feeble idea of the nature of any surface—often none at all. Any object in sunshine would be a sufficient proof of the universality and power of this law; but I will suggest one. When we see a horse and cart in sunshine, we shall find that the shadows thrown on his body by the saddle, bridle, and various parts of the harness, shafts, &c., by no means explain what are the forms of the objects casting those shadows; but they make us distinctly aware of the precise curvature of every part of the body on which they fall.

Let us now look at the shadow of the horse and cart on an even turnpike-road. Here the surface receiving it is flat, and we consequently see at once that it is the shadow of a horse and cart; but when the horse turns into a field in which the road is rugged by the frequent tramp of feet, and ploughed by the wheels of heavily-laden carts or waggons passing to and fro, we no longer recognise the shadow as that of a horse and cart; but, as it traverses the uneven road, we are made acquainted with the irregularity and inequality of its surface. Taking advantage of these or like circumstances, we can bring home to the mind and feelings facts which Art would otherwise very imperfectly convey.

Take also the case of a shadow falling on the hairy covering of an animal, when not only would the general form of the animal be shown by it, but *immediately on the edge* of such cast shadow we should especially distinguish the nature of the animal's covering.

These two classes of natural and accidental shadows would be more simplified and distinctly expressed by restricting the term "shade" to the former, and "shadow" to the latter, as we speak of the shaded side of a face, or a face under shadow. In cylindrical and rotund forms, such as the human frame presents, the shaded sides of objects separate from the light gradually; and suddenly, in those whose surfaces terminate in angles; but cast shadows invariably terminate in sharp lines, as I have already observed, and more remarkably so in sunlight: although they are more tender in what is called a borrowed or in-door light, they are, nevertheless, marked in like manner, but in less degree.

Though natural light-and-shade may be sufficient to represent the solidity or rotundity of single objects, or, in other words, the space they individually occupy, it is insufficient to express the spaces which separate the various objects constituting a whole picture, more especially a Landscape. Mere natural light and shade, such as we see under an entirely clouded or cloudless sky, without accidental interposition of any kind, would be perfectly inadmissible, except on rare occasions, as unfavourable to the limited means of Art.

So far our remarks have been confined to the effect of light and shade on individual objects: we are now to see how all light and shade operate on objects either individually or in groups, when considered in relation to the whole picture.

If we look at Example 1, Plate 15, we shall see that the outline of the distant mountains, CM, is marked against the sky in every part with equal force by a uniform colour; and that the sky behind them is also of an equal colour. The inevitable result of this is, that the mountains appear flat, and superficial; and so with the line of the near-ground, DG, which has the same defect, with the same consequences. In Example 2, the sky being brighter in some parts than in others, and the mountains also having their outlines sometimes darker, and at others more delicate, sometimes coming distinctly from the sky, at others mingling with it so as to be almost lost in it, the imagination is thus stimulated to make up what is not distinctly revealed to the eye; and the consequence is, that we are sensible in some degree of the expression of space. Instead of seeing the mountains flat, as in the former Example, the eye is attracted to their surfaces, and we thus receive a better expression of their solidity, and of space in the sky; but here again, the bushes in the foreground, which separate by a hard, uniform, and cutting line, appear flat, like the mountains in Example 1, and from the same causes.

We must, however, turn to Plate 16 to see this principle, of sometimes losing and sometimes marking the outlines, more fully carried out, even to such a degree as to render their detection in every part nearly impossible We here feel the expression of space; and imagine that we can leap from one surface to another, walk along the road, or over the plain, or climb the acclivities of the mountain sides. Thus one great step is achieved towards the expression of space, which the feelings receive with so much pleasure,—delighting in the triumph over the flat surface of the paper, which is so completely opposed to all ideas of permeable space.

This character of a varying outline, now strongly marked, now scarcely discernible, is indispensable to the delineation of every solid object; and in clouds, unless it be present in the utmost degree, we have no expression of their airy and evanescent fabric, as contrasted with other objects. In "Cloudland," forms change or vanish, combine with, or separate from each other, with a rapidity which defies their precise delineation at any one moment. Where in all this is facsimile imitation? How can it faithfully copy the ever-varying forms and hues of a cloud?

In cases where the sky has much variety—much light and dark cloud—it is comparatively easy to blend the landscape with it, whether the objects falling on it be those of the distance or of the foreground, as in Example 3, Plate 12, and in Plate 20. In this we are aided as well by the varied colour of the objects themselves as by the colour of the sky, each affording to the painter in its turn an opportunity of uniting them agreeably.

When the sky is of a uniform colour, or nearly so, to obtain the expression of solidity in the objects crossing it, it is indispensable that their outlines be of varied degrees of strength, so that the eye may be brought on to their surfaces. To accomplish this requires very nice adjustment, especially when the whole form is presented to the eye, as in Examples 1 and 2, Plate 19; otherwise the object would inevitably look flat, more especially if it were either naturally dark, or appeared so from being under shadow, like the castle in Example 2, or in Plate 21. Examining these Examples, and the waggon and horses in Example 4, Plate 11, where they separate from the sky, or any objects backed by a uniform colour, —such as the figures and horses in Example 1 of the same Plate, part A, where these separate from the hill, or the horses and waggon of Example 4, from the road,—the observant student will find that it is not by any sudden transitions from light to dark along the outline that all this expression of solidity, rotundity, and space is effected, but by every delicate gradation from the most sudden to the least perceptible, imparting to the several objects their appropriate aspect. The student need not confine himself to the Examples which I have more particularly referred to; he may turn to every other subject contained in this volume, and, examining each in turn, he will find that this law has been continually kept in mind, and that it is impossible to trace with equal distinctness, in every part, the line of demarcation which separates one object from another, and that consequently he receives that impression of solidity and rotundity which the light and shade are intended to convey. He may conclude his examination of this principle by turning to Plate 2, where he will find that the false, cutting, unbroken, marked, and visible outlines of the heads 2 and 3 negative the idea of rotundity. The light and shade is nullified, and they in consequence look flat, the line of the upper and back parts of the heads appears as near as the foreheads, and the sides as the fronts of the faces: compare these with Example 1, where, although the principle is but feebly carried out, still there is an improvement.

If the student now turn to Examples 1 and 2, Plate 12, he will in them see the mischief of hard, unbroken, and cutting lines, more distinctly exposed. The contour of every object in both subjects is as obvious as when they existed in outline only; they have been blackened, it is true, under the pretence of giving them "effect," but they have neither surface, space, nor light. Let these be compared with the Examples below them; in the latter it is difficult,—in some parts impossible,—to trace the complete outline of any object: the monotony of flatness and the repulsiveness of error are exchanged for space and truth. After the student has carefully examined the Examples to which I have directed his attention, he will, I think, have a perfect comprehension of the principle which it has been my desire to fix on his mind: not, be it understood, as a pretty observation, but as a positive law of Nature, attention to which aids the painter to express rotundity and solidity, or, in other words, the space which all objects occupy, and in all combinations.

If in the picture we have such a fortunate juxtaposition of dark and light-coloured objects that they at once appear separate from each other, we have then no occasion for adventitious assistance: the idea of space or separation is immediately conveyed by the different intensity of their colours; and by their contrast of dark with light, we have the expression of light as well as space, as may be seen in Example 4, Plate 11, where the dark colours of the foremost and of the third horse, and the light colour of the middle one, serve to separate them from each other; while the fourth horse, interposing between the white one and the distance, throws him forward and the distance back, thus giving space and brilliancy; and so with the dark figure in the foreground. The eye is induced to look around and beyond these objects; the mind is impressed with the ideas of light and space; and imagination sees in the great distance to the horizon " verge enough " for a long walk by the strand, in the bright cheerful light.

In Plate 14, we have the naturally dark roofs of the houses on the right separating from the sky, and from the church in light; and the shadow which these houses throw across the street, involves some of the figures, and part of the buildings on the opposite side of it; by this means we separate the figures in the foreground from the distant buildings, and thus at once express light and space, which it must be remembered have, in both these instances, been supplied by the nature of the subject; in the one by difference of local colour; in the other, by natural light and shade.

The same results are obtained by the same means in both examples of Plate 13, though not in equal degree. The trees in the foreground separate by the difference of local colour; the dark rock in the centre detaches from the distance by reason of the darkness it acquires from the shadow of the trees, while it gives by contrast greater brightness to the light beyond. Here again we have the expression of space by natural light and shade,—in other words, nothing has been supplied from the imagination, save the introduction of the figure and animals.

Still farther evidence of space being expressed by the difference of local colour is afforded by Plate 20, where the light rock, in the foreground, is caused to appear separate from the bank by the interposition of the dark dwarf fir-tree, which sends the one forward, and makes the other recede. So with the trees in the middle of the picture: they throw back the castle; and the dark tree towards the middle of the woody bank to the right, throws reflected light into the mass of shadow, and makes the distance between the bridge and the margin of the picture sensibly felt. The dark colours of the figures operate also to produce the same result,—space. This was one of the objects intended by their introduction; the other was to give greater interest to the subject. The precise places of the figures are decided by what I have shown when treating of composition.

It is not until the student has ascertained whether, by this difference of local colour, objects will naturally detach, and thus assist him to express space, that he can determine whether he requires the aid of accidental shadow, or not, or can know where to apply it with efficacy.*

When the expression of space is thus obtained from the natural difference of depth of colour in objects, they sometimes appear very conspicuous, especially if isolated, and surrounded by light, for they then call attention directly to them. As in Example 1, Plate 19, where we have the dark boats separating from the sky by their own dark colour, making the sky look luminous, whilst they in turn look more solid. In this case accidental shadow is not required; but in Example 2, the castle and trees, which there come against the sky, not being in their local colour strong enough to detach sufficiently from it, and still less from each other, require the assistance of the accidental shadow which is thrown across the picture, in order to obtain such a depth of colour as shall assist also in relieving one tree from another. The forms of objects which are thus rendered conspicuous, should be not only good, but even beautiful of their kind; in their associations they should also be appropriate with the subject, and so placed that they may augment by contrast and variety the value of other forms, and thus acquire at the same time additional value for themselves.

It will be seen, therefore, that in arranging the composition, the student, whilst assigning to each object its proper place with regard to its importance

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* If enough has not been done by the examples to which I have more especially called the student's attention, and he desires more, he has only to look at all the other plates for additional instances of its power; indeed this is the exercise which he should take as a means of increasing his experience and his convictions of the truth. Should he cover these dark objects for a moment by the finger or a piece of paper, he will immediately find that, wherever he does so, the expression of space is destroyed.

and its form, must also bear in mind its natural lightness or darkness, with regard to the aid he may derive from it towards the expression of space.

These means of obtaining the expression of space by difference in the depth of local colour, however powerful, are the most limited a painter has of overcoming the natural barrier which is presented by the flat surface on which he works. When the student comes to deal with accidental *shadow*, he has a wide field for the exercise of his talent: but before we proceed to the consideration of accidental shadow, I must stop for a moment to show why it is necessary to the painter. I have already observed, that the great impediment is the flat surface of his picture; yet this, under the fascinating power of Art, shall so deceive the eye, and affect the mind, that the imagination, losing all idea that every part must be equally near, ranges through all distances, passes over all kinds of surfaces, around and among the various objects, and revels in the pleasing illusion.

Were it impossible to take advantage of accidental shadow, especially in Landscape, Art would signally fail. With what chance of success could Art essay the landscape under a cloudless sky, where all objects are seen in the full splendor of solar light? or under a sky wholly obscured by clouds, where Nature is dimly seen beneath a faint and subdued light; where the colours and lines of objects are modified, from the foreground to the distance, by inappreciably and infinitely delicate gradations? In such circumstances, when even Nature herself is rarely pleasing, the utmost efforts of Art are all but nugatory; even a tolerable approach is scarcely attainable. The whole is too equally revealed, or too equally obscured. We are fatigued by the monotony of dazzling light in the one case, or of dull obscurity in the other.

Let the reader accompany me, in imagination, to the top of the hill overlooking the city, where, towering above the mass of houses, and inferior buildings, we have the majestic cathedral, the great public buildings, the public monuments, the winding river, its woody margin, and the bridges crossing it; the fortress on the rock, and the mountains and lake in the distance. These are the leading features which arrest our attention, and live in our memory. Under a cloudless sky we have the labyrinth of houses, with their chimneys and windows, streets, lanes, and alleys, distinctly revealed. Every tree on the bank, every fracture on the mountains, every irregularity of every surface is equally illuminated, and all thrusting themselves on the aching sight in multitudinous confusion: we cannot remember all, we cannot see all, we do not want to look at all. But let the clouds cast their fleeting shadows across the scene, and through the intervals let the sunbeams light up those features which the mind loves to dwell upon, and the memory to recal: then are the charms of the scene heightened and emphasized by the contrast. The eye is no longer distracted by the maze of objects which affords it no pleasure, while the mind is enabled to enjoy every beauty, alternately glowing in light, or falling into shade, to be revealed anew.

Accidental shadow is a grand means in the hands of the painter for effectively expressing space. With it, he obscures wholly or partially whatever is not necessary to his picture as a whole, or would detract from its beauties by an equal display of deformity or commonplace features. He at one time conceals the poverty of Nature, and at another her inimitable or too great abundance; gives to objects an artificial force and solidity, that he may by the contrast express the presence of strong light, or suggest the idea of space, and induce the eye and the mind to dwell on whatever is most interesting, and should, therefore, be most conspicuous. Here again with objects in combination, as well as when single, on a great as well as on a small scale, the nature of their surfaces is explained by accidental shadows falling on them—the acclivities of the mountain-sides, the depth of the valleys, and the irregularities of their surfaces.

Accidental shadows must not appear in spots obscuring the scene here and there, and showing their forms entire, so that they might be cut out; this would be contrary to their general character. When thrown on a great scale by clouds, they rarely or never show their entire forms except on the sides of mountains, and even then they are usually modified by the irregularity of the surface on which they fall.

These accidental shadows should run continuously from side to side of the picture, as in Example 1, Plate 18, and should neither be seen in spots, nor be suddenly arrested. In Example 1, Plate 13, the shadow which begins on the right-hand side, on the edge of the hill, and involves the trees in the middle distance, is suddenly stopped at the dark cow, and in consequence of this, all that portion of the picture appears flat; but in Example 2, we find

Pl. 18.

Ex. I.

Ex. 2.

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that the shadow, after passing over the trees and rock, as in Example 1, is carried across the water to the other side of the picture. A comparison of the two Examples will instantly enable the student to decide which of the two gives the best idea of space, and make him aware how much is owing to the accidental shadow being continuous.

Accidental shadows also mainly contribute to the expression of light as well as space, by affording the necessary opposition; but if their continuity were interrupted, we should at once, in that part, expose the flat surface of the picture in all its deformity, by an unbroken light from the top to the bottom: paleness, not light, would be the result; and thus both light and space would be lost. Proof of what is here stated, may be at once obtained by covering for a moment the whole or any portion of this shadow, Example 1, Plate 18, with soft white chalk;* we shall then neither have the idea of space nor light. By the aid of this shadow, as it exists in the Example, the foreground is separated from the distance, and both appear as if seen through an illuminated atmosphere: neither of these effects could be obtained without it, which will be more clearly seen by reference to Example 2.

Accidental shadows in Landscape proceed for the most part from clouds; and we generally see those shadows sweeping across it in tracts alternating with light, as in Example 1, Plate 18. When these unbroken tracts of shadow are introduced in a subject which but for such appliances would possess little or no interest, as in Example 2, we distinctly perceive the advantageous result. By this artifice of the accidental shadow, the trees and buildings are made conspicuous; the round forms of the one, contrast the angles and straight lines of the other; the distance is made to recede, and the foreground is brought forward. We are rendered sensible of the variety of forms and quantities: we perceive the level character of the country, in contrast, with the distant hills, and the forms of the clouds: thus we learn how all the objects in this way give value to each other.

Again, it is by the lower edge or limit of this shadow, that we are in a great degree made sensible of the undulations of the foreground, or the nature of the materials composing it. Here, in the midst of the shadow, we do not find the character and interest of the objects collectively or singly,

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* This can be easily removed with crumbs of bread.

forcibly expressed, but on its edges or limits. Here also we may see, as has been shown in the "Elementary Art," that, on a grand scale as well as on a small one, character is to be found more marked on the extremities than on the inner spaces.

Let us now look at the Examples 1 and 2, Plate 19: the shadow crosses from side to side in these pictures, and by enveloping their various features, assists to throw the sky back, and the near-ground forward; and besides this, it helps us to appreciate the flatness of the beach in the one, and in the other, it clearly distinguishes the varied surface of the ground, and marks the forms of the waggon and figures, which are brought across its lower edge, in order that they may be there pronounced more strongly, and thus cause the shadow to recede.

From these Examples we may turn to Example 2, Plate 15, where the chief alterations or additions to the subject have been made on the *margin* of the foreground in shadow and in light. By the introduction of the castle and trees in shadow, and by placing the figures in the foreground in light, variety and character have thus been added, where they tell with the most power, namely, on the outline, and in obedience to the law of Nature derived from the study of the individual object. The continuity of the line of shadow across the picture has been kept up by the dark figure on the waggon, which, while it gives variety and character to the outline of the shadow, assists in throwing back the distance, and that too by the most effectual means—the sudden opposition of near and remote objects.

It is important that the general mass of light, as well as the shade, should be taken across the picture, and for the same reasons; but the *brightest objects*, by the aid of which we can often continue the light across the picture horizontally or diagonally, and make it sparkling and brilliant, must be separate. In order that I may be clearly understood, I have carried out these principles in Plates 18 and 19, in an obvious manner: it must, however, be remembered, that neither these nor any other artifices which we may be compelled to avail ourselves of, are to be mechanically practised as "tricks of Art." Such artifices or expedients are only to be regarded as means to an end, and as requiring to be employed with judgment in surmounting any of the difficulties of pictorial combination. They are most successfully applied when they escape detection, and leave us in admiration of the effects wrought out through their agency.

Ex. I.

Drawn & Engraved by J. D. Harding.

Ex. 2.

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It will be seen from the remarks already made, that there are two grand distinctions in the comprehensive distribution of shades and shadows. Across the picture, from side to side, they should be continuous; but up and down it, they must alternate with light in every degree of intensity, according to the nature, distance, or local colour of the objects. Between lights and shades we have also the following remarkable differences. In Nature we continually see the precise form of the lights, so that we can trace them completely; but the reverse is the case with the shades and shadows, all of which mingle and unite; taking our lesson, therefore, again from the individual object, we shall find that in a picture the lights or light parts may be separate and isolated; but the shades and shadows must be continuous and blend into each other.* The light, in a picture, being thrown on objects of an agreeable form, we can enjoy the contemplation of them entire and separate; but as shadow is thrown over the least interesting features, and never can in itself be attractive, it should never be made to engage our attention by presenting an entire form.

In addition to what has been said respecting natural light and shade, it must be noticed, that in every mass of light there is always some one part *lighter* than the rest, and in the shadows some part *deeper* than the general mass; and that it is just as important to apply these laws to any assemblage of objects as to objects individually.

Without some light of superior brightness, we should be unable to fix the attention on the most imposing feature, among a number; and without parts in shadow darker than all around, we should fail to give any notion of reflected light; all would either be heavy or pale. Let the student turn to each illustration here offered to him in every complete Example, from Plates 10 to 24, and see the result of observing those principles. He will invariably find, that whatever may be the degree of darkness of the shadows, some portions are always to be found darker than the rest, so that for the most part each picture consists of every variety of light up to white, and every variety of shade down to black, in varied quantities.

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* The most perfect corroboration of what is here stated, as well as of all the principles of light and shade which I have enunciated, is to be found in the productions of the Daguerreotype and the Calotype—where Nature herself puts down her own truths.

This brings us to the consideration of what is usually termed "middle tint," which, united to positive light and dark in all sorts of proportions, has been recommended, as if pictures could be made up like medical prescriptions.

In Nature, there is little that is either positively white or black. As every object is seen, according to its distance, through a greater or less quantity of air, always to a certain degree opaque, this opacity tends to dim the brightness of the lights, and hence to subdue the intensity of the shadows; and as this effect takes place in the greatest degree on objects in the extreme distance, we there see both light and shadow blended into one uniform colour. As the objects gradually approach us, this effect is diminished. There is also another circumstance operating on shadow to deprive it of intensity, namely, reflexion; in the open air and in day-light, it is rare indeed to see any shadow bordering on positive blackness, and a simple illustration of this is afforded by comparing the darkest shadows with any object actually black. In landscape, the positive depth of colour, of drapery, or of the covering of animals, tell by contrast with remarkable force. When, however, the extremes of light and dark are seen, they are small in quantity, isolated, and should be in immediate contact.

It is astonishing how frequently we are deceived with regard to the actual strength of a shadow, or the brightness of a light; clouds will appear bright and even dazzling, but if there be a white cow in a field near us, or a white cloth drying on the hedge, they, when compared with the clouds, will appear brighter by several degrees: this of course is owing as well to contrast, as to the difference in the quantity of air through which they are severally seen.

The reduction of shade, or shadow, and light, in their strength or brightness in every possible gradation, naturally occasions a prevalence of what, for want of a better name, is called "half tint," and it is on this that the painter depends for the expression of atmosphere. If this, however, be unaccompanied by the effect which is to be obtained from the introduction of some darker parts within every shade, of every depth, and some parts of superior brightness, within every mass of light, poverty and flatness will be the inevitable consequence. As, for the sake of atmosphere, it is always necessary to stop short of positive blackness, or positive whiteness, and as atmosphere and reflected light are expressed in proportion as the shadows are delicate and the lights subdued, it is manifest that there is great danger of the picture being feeble and insipid; hence then, to make dark shadows look transparent, and to preserve power and light in the picture, some parts, small in quantity, but respectively darker and lighter than the general body of the shadow or light, must be seen in the midst of each. These principles are exemplified in Plate 17. In the hill to the left, and also in the water, the dark trees on the one, and the dark figures and boat on the other, give transparency to the general shadow, whilst the bright lights on the castle, sky, and boats give brightness to the general mass of light shed over the distance and sky. Without these appliances all would appear tame and monotonous: see also Plates 13, 19, and 20.

When, from the remoteness of objects, such as the distant mountains in Plate 17, or from shadows being thrown on objects not near enough to admit of great strength of colour, there is danger of insipidity and paleness, an equivalent is obtained by the introduction of some bright objects, as is here done; such as the sails of the boats, the steam from the steam-boat, and the streak of light on the water, all of which make the colour around them appear darker by the contrast. The consequence of this is, that atmospheric effect and brightness are obtained without paleness, and depth of colour without blackness.

We come now to take another lesson from cast or accidental shadows, by means of which Nature gives so much emphasis to her individual objects, and generally to them when associated, by placing the extreme dark and the extreme light in immediate contact. This principle, when carried out in the general light and shade of a picture, to its utmost extent, throws space into the whole, fills it with atmosphere, and gives breathing room, from the foreground to the sky. There must be one light beyond all the others brilliant, and one positive dark beyond all others intense. See the effect of the dark rock against the sky, in Example 2, Plate 23, and the boat, in Example 3, Plate 24.

Before we proceed further we must come to the consideration of a term which is frequently made use of in relation to Art, and always associated with light and shade, namely, "BREADTH." This has on all hands been insisted on as indispensable, in the same way as the "balancing of a composition;" but it is equally vague and indefinite, even in cases where experience may have taught its importance and necessity. Breadth is the proper and effective disposition of the light and shade of a picture in large portions or masses, varying in quantity, brightness, or intensity, according to the nature of the subject or the intentions of the painter. Breadth proceeds from the very nature of Art, and the limits of its capability in depicting the profuse detail of Nature: this has already been shown in Chapter II. on Imitation, particularly at page 17. Breadth must be given to our first efforts on the individual object. If we turn to Figures 1, 2, and 3, Plate 6, we shall there see that, neither in the masses of light or shade, is there a single leaf pourtrayed, even in a remote degree; we have everywhere broad masses of white paper for light, and of black chalk for shade, in consequence of our entire inability to depict every leaf; and we have only the character of the leaves on the extremities of the lights and shades. Consequently, at the very outset, breadth is forced on us, for the reasons which have been dwelt on in the Chapter on Composition, and particularly at page 67. The study of breadth in an entire picture is yet more important, because it is then viewed in a larger sense. To apply it successfully is a high attainment; for, thus aided, we are enabled to present to the mind at once whatever is necessary to the comprehension of the subject,—and no more.

In the details necessarily attending an assemblage of objects, and more particularly the infinite quantity connected with every kind of landscape, there must be immeasurably more than the most unwearied disposition to accuracy could trace even feebly: and even if they could be accurately depicted, there would be a perpetual recurrence of forms and quantities, distracting to the mind, and preventing its attention from being fixed on the general sentiment of the picture, or on the more striking objects; it would be repulsed and fatigued by sameness, and multiplication of insignificant parts. The great and the little cannot be received and enjoyed together.

The landscape-painter must therefore resort to the aid of the accidental shadows thrown by clouds, to obscure more or less whatever forms and details may be unnecessary, or such as may either interfere with his general design, or with any striking features whose beauties he might wish more especially to enhance.

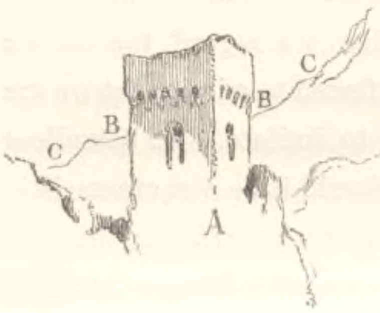
The frequent necessity for obscuring or subduing, more or less, so large a portion of a picture, arises, first, from its being out of the power of Art to pourtray so vast a multitude of parts as almost every subject must necessarily bring with it; and, secondly, because without this obscuration, all the important features would lose their influence and point, by being mixed up with others, whose equal portraiture would claim equal attention. This obscuration, however, must not degenerate into coarseness or clumsiness, nor appear but as a cloak to conceal either ignorance, or the want of sensibility for all those delicate graces of Nature which serve to enrich the more striking; and neither should there be perceived in it the mark of idleness, or the affectation of power. Large unmeaning masses cannot be imposed on us for "breadth and grandeur of style," nor can they compensate for the absence of all that is noble, graceful, or powerful, in Nature and Art.

When we consider the great variety and beauty with which the simplest landscape abounds,—whether we dwell on the unceasing change, and infinite quantity of shape and shade on all sides, or whether we regard the simple beauties and graces of the herb we tread on,—we are forced to admit that we are surrounded by an abundance beyond all human skill to imitate. As boundless profusion is one of Nature's striking attributes, so should it be a characteristic of Art; and the skill of that painter would be consummate, who, in the dim obscurity of shade and distance, could fill his canvass with beauty, but half discerned, in deference to the one great sentiment of the whole, to which, above all, he attracts and demands our attention. When the whole picture abounds with varied quantities and forms, under greater or less obscurity—in deference to those features, which are made more prominent because they more deservedly claim our attention—then is "breadth" rightly employed. Too much detail in the shadows would degenerate into littleness; and too little into heaviness.

As in Nature the eye passes from one important object to another, without bestowing on the intervals more than a glance, the painter should induce it to do the same in a picture, by completing the important features or light parts, and leaving the intervals either obscured by shadow, or less complete. This must be observed in order that we may conform to a law of vision. When we direct the principal visual ray to any object, we see that object clearly, and all around less distinctly; if we shift our view to a neighbouring object, that is, in its turn, distinctly seen, whilst the one to which we before directed our sight is now but feebly discerned. As we shift our sight from one object to another, we, at each change, have a different picture on the retina, the principal objects becoming accessories, and *vice versâ*.

In illustration of this principle of vision, let A be an object to which we steadfastly direct our sight: if there be any other beyond, as BB, we cannot see that part of BB, where its lines are in immediate contact with A, so distinctly as at some little distance from it, as, for example, at CC. Consequently, when drawing an object which is beyond another, as we approach the foremost one, we must gradually show less and less of the detail of the more remote, and, just as it comes in contact with the other, the outline and details should vanish altogether, as in Example 2, here given. Thus, again, we are aided in the expression of space. What is here meant will be further illustrated by reference to Example 5, Plate 8, where, looking first at the outlines of the mountains, it will be perceived that, just at the point where their lines are about to intersect each other, those of the more distant are made paler, and are thus caused to appear beyond those on the left, and separate from the mountain which immediately rises behind the castle. If we regard the details on the surfaces of all, we shall see that the same principle has been observed; this is most conspicuous in the details of the mountain behind, and almost in contact with, the castle.*

1



2

As the light or bright portions of a picture immediately attract the eye, their arrangement should be the first consideration; and the chief feature, of whatever kind,—if in a landscape, that which gives name to the view,—should, if possible, be placed in light, as the castle, in Plate 20. If

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* It will be desirable for the student to make a copy in outline of this subject, attending to the instructions I have given him. If it be done as he is here instructed to do it, he will find that one mountain will appear beyond another. If he afterwards continues the lines of the more distant mountains till they actually touch the lines of the nearer ones, he will then see that the indication of intermediate space is thus lost.

unavoidably in shadow, as in Plate 21, it should be contrasted by light, that it may attract immediate attention; and to be worthy of being made so conspicuous it should be a good example of its kind,—beautiful, if possible.

Objects receiving the light must differ in form, in quantity, in interest, and in brightness; and must be so placed as not to allow the eye to run from one to the other perpendicularly or horizontally, for the reasons given at pages 61 and 62.

The horizontal and perpendicular lines which form the boundary of a picture, are as great an impediment to overcome by the distribution of the light and shade, as by the composition. The manner in which the outlines of objects in Nature are seen, sometimes relieving strongly, at others so little, that it is often impossible to detect their precise limits, has already been pointed out at page 95. Applying this to the boundary of a picture, we must sometimes have the shadows or tones of colour coming strongly against it and marking it positively, anon more feebly, and at other times so gently as to be scarcely perceptible—and always in various proportions—as in Example 1, of Plate 18, at the lines AAA. Thus, by adopting a principle derived from Nature, the formal limits of a picture are rendered less obtrusive. So little was this understood by the old landscape painters, that there is scarcely one of their pictures in which its precise form is not forced on us by the arrangement of the light and shade. The first thing we become sensible of in looking at their pictures, is the flat surface on which they are painted. Backhuysen, Vandevelde, Claude, and Gaspar Poussin, almost invariably threw a shade over their foregrounds, which they always brought down to the lower edge of the picture with increasing strength, evidently with the intention of marking the line with all the power of the palette. To carry this out still further,—for it evidently was their intention—the two latter always had a large tree or trees on one side of the picture, and sometimes on both, reaching from bottom to top; and if any dark clouds were introduced in their skies, they were usually made darkest at the top of the picture. The effect of this in every case is, that in their pictures the foregrounds appear as if *built* on the lower edges, and the sides as if supported by the sides of the frames, whilst from their upper edges the skies hang like the valance of a curtain. The grand climax of all these defects, however, is, that the pictorial value of every line and form is impaired in consequence of the artificial boundary of the picture being thus made so obtrusive.

Every picture produces a different impression upon us from the difference of light and shade, or what is called its "effect," as well as from the difference of subject. All kinds of effects are not suited to every kind of subject; and of the various ways in which the light and shade may be thrown, or distributed, at the will of the painter, some effects are, or rather must be, better than others. Let the student examine Plates 20, 21, and 22; he will find that they are precisely the same in composition, alike in manipulation, alike in everything but the light and shade: the difference of their effect upon us arises from neglecting, or from observing, an important principle.

Plate 21 differs in sentiment from Plate 20, as well as in light and shade; and it is a question, to be decided by our own feelings, whether the repose of evening be more agreeable than sunshine and showers. In each, the several important features are displayed with nearly equal effect. In Plate 21, the principal object, the castle, arrests the attention at once, in consequence of its being strongly contrasted by the sky; and although we are here more sensible of its picturesque contour, we yet lose much of the variety of its different parts in uniform obscurity. On the whole, there is not the same amount of space expressed, because the objects generally do not separate by alternate light and shade, as in Plate 20, and the trees on the right do not detach from the sky. The monotony which prevails throughout the light and shade would not, however, be felt in colour.

There can be no doubt, that of all the three, Plate 22 is the least satisfactory; and this is clearly owing to the disregard of placing the most conspicuous object in light. The principal light is on an uninteresting and unimportant feature, namely, on the hill on which the castle stands; and thus, as there is a light immediately behind the group of trees in the centre of the picture, our attention is drawn to them as well as to the castle, the picturesque form of which is all that we see in feeble contrast with the sky. Thus the castle, though of primary importance — for without it the subject has little or no interest—is all but lost sight of in the rivalry of what

Pl. 20.

Drawn & Engraved by J. D. Harding.

Published by Chapman & Hall.

Pl. 21.

Drawn & Engraved by J. D. Harding.

Published by Chapman & Hall.

Pl. 22.

Drawn & Engraved by J. D. Harding

Published by Chapman & Hall.

Pl. 23.

Ex. 1.

Ex. 2.

Drawn & Engraved by J.D. Harding.

Published by Chapman & Hall.

is insignificant. Nor is this all: the light on the water is immediately under the light on the castle-hill; and the light on the rock is also under the light in the sky; and the bridge is nearly extinguished. The whole picture wants space and concentration of interest; and the subject, though good, is reduced in its effect to the level of commonplace. The value of the principles enforced is here shown by the consequence of their infringement.

Were light and shade wholly a matter of feeling, as is frequently insisted on, and dependent on the caprice of the painter, there is no reason why the feelings should not have suggested just such light and shade as is here given, the faults of which, be it observed, would be less easily detected in combination with pleasing colour. But are the feelings satisfied with what is done, or can the undirected feelings suggest a change for the better? Is there anything to assure their being nearer the truth in the second effort than in the first?

The successful application of light-and-shade in overcoming the flat surface of the picture, is but a poor achievement if unaccompanied by sentiment. We demand the magic influence of mid-day sparkling in abrupt transitions; the mingling shades of dawn and of twilight. By the powerful influence of light-and-shade, we crouch at the storm, and shiver in the breeze. Its poetical influence is independent of subject. In the most trifling we may infuse cheerfulness or repose; and even in the grandest the sentiment may be enhanced. An unpretending subject, such as Example 1, Plate 23, which, divested of its light and shade, possesses nothing to mark it from a thousand others, may be made pleasing or impressive; and a bare rock by the sea-shore, such as Example 2, is sufficient to convey the expression of any sentiment, gay or dreary; indeed, for the expression of such sentiments as are within the range of light and shade, it is quite as possible to have too much subject as too little.

In proportion as a subject is poor, compensation must be made by the interest given to the sky. It is the sky which unites the several parts of a landscape into one harmonious whole—it enriches poverty by supplying new forms, or by affording contrasts to those which the subject itself possesses. It is to the sky that the landscape-painter must look as the great source of every effect worthy of pictorial record. Varying for ever in form and colour, its fitful changes are communicated to the landscape—now obscure, now bright.

Terra-firma may indeed afford a good subject; but from "cloudland" we must derive impressive sentiment. Often when the student has roamed far and wide in search of something "worthy of his pencil," he would have done better to have remained at home, and, besides looking to the earth for subjects, have looked upwards to the sky for inspirations of sentiment in which to clothe them.

Without sentiment, the painter of Landscape would make his mountains high, but not inaccessible to all but thought; large, but not immense; his gulfs might be deep, but they would not be profound, or terrible: he might paint a storm, or a shipwreck, but he would fail to suggest "the remorseless dash of billows," the "rushing mighty wind," or "the live thunder" from the dark cloud where "Tempest sits enthroned."

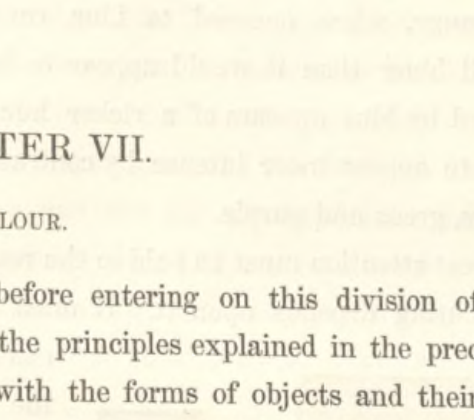
CHAPTER VII.

COLOUR.

IT is presumed that the student, before entering on this division of Art, has made himself acquainted with the principles explained in the preceding chapters, and that he is conversant with the forms of objects and their light and shade; for, accordingly as their surfaces receive the light directly, or are turned away from it into shade, so will their colours be developed, or obscured.

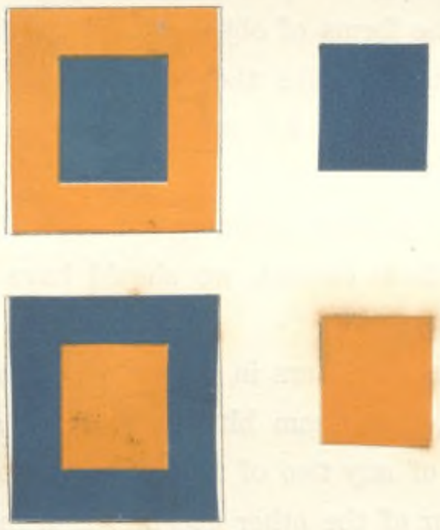
In Nature there are only three primary colours—yellow, red, and blue; and could we obtain perfect pigments of these colours, we should have all we require.

From the combination of these three primary colours in pairs, proceed three other colours; orange from red and yellow, green from blue and yellow, and purple from red and blue. The combination of any two of the primary colours forms what is called the complemental colour of the other one, and a primary colour and its complemental, when placed adjacent to each other, mutually increase each other's intensity. Under certain circumstances the primary colours suggest to us various ideas: yellow and red suggest light and heat, and nearness; blue, coldness and distance. Every approach towards yellow and red is a step towards warmth and brightness,



and every approach towards blue is a step towards coldness and distance; that is to say, they excite in us those ideas. Yellow gives a greater idea of warmth than red; blue is the coldest colour, and in its greatest intensity borders on black. Of the complemental colours, orange, from having no blue, is warmer than green; and green, from the presence of yellow, is warmer than purple.

Orange, when opposed to blue, causes it to appear more intense, that is, still bluer than it would appear to be alone; and, in like manner, orange opposed by blue appears of a richer hue. Red and yellow are in like manner made to appear more intense by contrast with their respective complemental colours, green and purple.



Great attention must be paid to the results of this opposition, as *all the beauty* of colouring depends upon it. It must be remarked that there is no actual change either in the blue or orange, the change is in their effect on us; they are not actually brighter by this opposition, but to us they appear so. We are made sensible, by reason of this opposition, of an increased brilliancy of hue, or, in other words, of a colour which has no existence except in our sensations, and is to be ascribed to the effect which the opposition has on the optic nerve*.

The most powerful contrast has been employed in the example here given, to show the reciprocal influence of both the blue and the orange. It is quite clear that each of these colours must affect the other when in juxtaposition, and produce hues of every variety of delicacy and intensity; whether we see and feel them or not depends on our vision being sensitive by nature, and being made more so by education.

All colours in Nature are changed more or less by atmosphere, light and shade, and reflexion. Even the positive colours of flowers are modified accordingly as they receive the light or are obscured by shade. When objects

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[*] To judge properly of these effects it will be necessary to hide with a piece of paper the upper and lower examples alternately as they are viewed.

are at any considerable distance, and more especially when far remote, as in the extreme distances of landscapes, their colours, which are rarely positive, are then broken, by the effect of the atmosphere, into innumerable hues, verbally indescribable. Though we may say that the sky is blue, that the sea is blue or green, and that trees are green, yet strictly speaking, they are not positively blue or green: however nearly they may approach blue or green, they are but hues of these colours appearing more or less blue, or yellow, as modified by light, atmosphere, and reflexion. On account of the complex operation of these causes on colours, as in the instances I have given in the sky and sea, we say that we find the sky of a blueish, and the sea of a greenish colour; or of other objects, that they are of a reddish, yellowish, or greenish hue. From the colours being thus "broken," they are utterly undefinable, and inexplicable by language. No words will convey a precise idea of them; they are neither fixed or fixable.

Our next step in the study of colour is to understand what is meant by colour being of any particular hue. Hue is the result of contrasts and affinities.

As there are only three primary colours in nature, if three pigments could be procured of these colours quite perfect, we could then, by their combination, in every varied degree of strength and quantity, obtain every possible variety of colour, and there would be no necessity for the various other pigments which we are compelled to have recourse to in consequence of the imperfection of every blue, red, and yellow. To show what is here meant, we may take the blues, Ultramarine, French-blue, Cobalt, Prussian-blue, and Indigo. The first two are the purest; but Ultra-marine, not being very available in water-colours, from its want of transparency, its place is supplied by French-blue. Cobalt has a pinky tinge and no depth, and would not therefore make green by a mixture with yellow. Prussian-blue and Indigo have a green tinge, and are therefore unfit for the purity of skies. The material pigments of the three primitive colours, when combined in their utmost strength, supposing them to be perfect, would produce black, and thus destroy each other.

Let blue and yellow, producing green, be combined; if red be added in any proportion, the green will be impaired according to the strength or quantity of the red, and the colour formed will become a broken green: the red has destroyed its positive colour, and it is now a reddish green.

If to yellow a little more blue be added than is necessary to make a perfect green, the colour will still be green; but as blue prevails over the yellow, we should call it a bluish green; if, on the contrary, yellow were added in the same degree, greater than necessary to make a perfect green, we should then call it yellow green, as the yellow would be the prevailing colour; and so on with all the rest of the combinations, which, if I have been rightly understood, it is not necessary for me to enumerate. See the following examples,


Yellow Green.


Green with Red.


Blue Green.

Broken colours, such as are represented by the pigments, burnt umber, Vandyke brown, sepia, brown madder, &c., are all made up of varied combinations of the primaries by Nature herself. For instance, all the primaries are present in brown madder; blue and red prevail, but the presence of yellow prevents it from being a positive purple. If brown madder be placed in juxtaposition with orange, which is the complemental colour of blue, then the blue in the brown madder will be rendered more apparent by contrast; it will appear of a bluer hue than when viewed separately. The red and yellow in the orange, from their superior brightness and power, absorb the more feeble rays of these colours in the brown madder, and thus cause the hue of blue to be more apparent. Any colour which powerfully impresses itself on the eye, has the effect of calling up the complemental colour —as red, for instance, calls up green; and hence it is that we see more of blue in the brown madder by reason of the opposition of the orange.


Brown Madder and Orange.


Brown Madder and Green.

If it be desirable to give to Brown Madder a yellower or a redder hue, it is only necessary to place purple, the complemental colour of yellow, or green, the complemental colour of red, in juxtaposition with it: in each case a change of colour is wrought on our perceptions, not on the colour itself, as that in each example remains the same. The brown madder itself, also, reacts on the colours by which it is opposed or associated, and gives to them a hue, by neutralising the effect of those colours, in proportion to the quantity of their components which enters into its own composition. Thus, without in any degree changing a colour actually, we can produce a change in its effect on the eye; and this change is capable of any degree of modification. There are then two modes of changing a colour, either by adding to it more of the colour required, or by forcing it to assume the required colour by means of opposition *.

Brown Madder.

Brown Madder and Purple.

From this, if I have been clearly understood, it will appear that colours, by acting on each other, produce hues of every kind at the control of the painter. All the colours proceeding from his palette, however he may combine them, are, after all, only various compounds of the three primary colours. Whilst the colour is on his palette, he cannot absolutely determine if it be suitable for the purpose to which he intends to apply it: it is only when on his picture, and surrounded by other colours, that he can judge whether it has acquired the appropriate hue; it is then that he sees and feels a hue over it, and over others around it; from this he decides on retaining or changing it. As over every portion of a picture there are hues which arise from the opposition of colours, and which have no existence save in our perceptions, it is evident that, in colour at least, the picture on the canvass is only the vehicle of a picture to the mind, where only it has existence in all its variety of hues, tender or forcible, warm or cold.

If we could remove any colour from one part of a picture to another—such as one of the colours of the foreground to the middle distance—we should find that it would appear of another hue: although, when in its place, it might appear in perfect "keeping," yet when transposed it would seem inappropriate,—either too yellow, too red, or too blue. Again, if we were to select from different parts of a picture any two broken colours, which we believed to be alike, we should generally find, when they were brought together, and placed side by side, that they differed almost as much as any other two broken colours in the picture. The colours seen in the picture are not the colours brought from the palette; every charm depends on their relation, and would be destroyed by their transposition.

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* The student, who is desirous of profiting by the information here offered to him, should take the trouble to carry it out for himself fully, on all the colours, as given in column 1 of the Table at page 126. As nothing can teach him so effectually as his own personal experience, he must be witness of the truth for himself to make the instruction he receives practically useful.

Hues are owing to the effect which adjacent colours produce on the optic nerve; they are pleasing in proportion as they contribute towards a perfect comprehension of what light and shade and form had begun. When thus acted on we forget or lose sight of the means, because we are fascinated by the result; but if, from ignorance or want of power, no hues are obtained, instead of being elevated by the sentiment of colour, we find ourselves brought down to inspect the tangible and material pigments of the colour-box or the palette: the evening light has resolved itself into yellow ochre, the sky into ultramarine or cobalt, and instead of dewy meadows and trees we see indigo and gamboge.

As the innumerable hues of colour are subtle, and difficult of detection, it is most essential to possess what, in painters' phraseology, is called a "good eye for colour," that is to say, an eye so sensitive as to perceive the minutest influence of one colour on another. There are some persons whose optic nerve is so obtuse that they are unable to distinguish red, and others who mistake blue for black, just as there are others whose hearing is too obtuse to distinguish one tune or even one note from another.

Natural power in the eye to distinguish colour, is as indispensable to the painter as a musical ear is to the musician; but whatever may be the natural power of the eye, it may be improved by instruction and exercise. At first the student sees only the broad distinctions of colours; next, that yellow, red, or blue is prevalent in any combination, as yellow, red, or blue grey; he can detect the prevalence of any particular pigment, whether it be yellow ochre or Indian yellow, light red or pink madder, French blue or ultramarine, and he may be able to state the constituents of any colour; at length he sees and feels those niceties of hue which, though they exceed verbal description, are yet within the power of the pencil to display.

Seeing then that colours, simple or compound, primary or broken, when in juxtaposition, are productive of endless hues at the will of the painter, and that these hues can no more be described by words than the hues of nature, our only security for their production is in our power to see them: we have less concern with the colours on our palette, than with the hues they assume when in their places on the picture. No wonder then that the painter finds it difficult, and often impossible, to say what pigments he has used, here or there, for this or that purpose; no prescription could be given for them; the hue produced, is owing to his preconception of what is required, rather than to any particular mixture.

As no change takes place in the colours themselves, to make them appear so different when on the picture to what they are on the palette, it is indisputable, that the change is to be ascribed to the effect on the optic nerve produced by their association. All persons are aware that they regard some combinations of colour with delight, others with indifference, and some with positive pain. To make this more completely understood, or rather felt, I here give an example, which few will look on without feeling annoyance, though neither of the colours, when viewed separately, excites any unpleasant sensation. The optic nerve is here too much affected. Turning to the other examples given, no such results take place: we can look on them with pleasure,—certainly without pain.

Vermilion and Grey.

This inquiry into the effects of colours on the optic nerve might be pursued much farther; but my purpose here is only to treat of the influence of colours as applied to art, and not to enter into a metaphysical and abstruse investigation of their nature and properties.

In determining the prevailing hue or tone of colour, as accordant with the sentiment of the subject, the student must be guided by his judgment; its strength or quantity his feelings must regulate. He ought not to outrage good taste, by giving to tragedy bright and vivid colours, and to comedy grave and sober ones; nor should he attempt the sombre gloom of the cathedral with colours fitted only for sunlight. In landscape, Nature herself will furnish him with that general tone of colour expressive of the various times of the day, climate, seasons, soil, atmosphere, and weather.

In this general hue, as adapted to the sentiment we would express, consists much of the poetry and the charm of colour. This general hue of colour, however, must not degenerate into monotony; and though it must be all-pervading, yet it must not be obtrusively predominant.

As it is owing to contrast and opposition of colours that we are enabled to obtain various hues, the prevailing hue of the whole picture may be heightened by the same means; that is, by the introduction of other colours in their utmost force and contrast. Of course, the employment of all such positive colours must be confined to figures and animals; their quantity and intensity we must regulate according to the general prevailing hue of the picture, and we must stop short when we find they are likely to overcome its effect by their too great local brilliancy. As these positive colours are in turn-acted on, they should be cautiously used; for should they be made to appear too conspicuous, the attention would be directed to them, and the general effect of the picture weakened. The bright and positive colours, which we are thus enabled to introduce, being, by comparison, brighter, richer, and more powerful than any of the others, serve consequently to make the latter look aerial, and therefore to fill the whole picture with the expression of atmosphere. Pure yellow, red, and blue, are required to enable us to give the effect of distance on the broken colours, just as in light and shade we require pure white to exhibit the strength of the half tints, and pure black to give by contrast transparency to the deepest shades. The general richness and power of colour in the picture, are dependent on our using the richest and brightest colours which the palette will afford, since these subdue the brightness of all others, and are the test of power or feebleness; by comparison with them we know whether, on the whole, we have been too prodigal or too sparing of colour.

In order that what I have further to say on the subject of colour may be more clearly understood, I subjoin the following Table, as adapted to painting in water-colours, showing the colour that is to be obtained when each of the pigments over the columns 2, 3, and 4, is mixed with one of those in column 1.

	1	2 With Indian-yellow or Gamboge	3 With Ultramarine or French-blue	4 With Indigo
	Yellow-ochre makes	. . . .	Grey-green.	Green.
Broken colours.	Light red ,,	Rich orange.	Aerial-grey.	Green-grey.
	Burnt sienna ,,	Do. more transparent.	Warm-grey.	Dark warm-green.
	Burnt umber ,,	Yellow-brown, rich.	Do. less warm.	Do. less warm.
	Vandyke brown ,,	Do. not so rich.	Do. still less warm.	Do. still less warm.
	Sepia . . ,,	Do. approaching green.	Grey.	Dark cold green.
	Brown madder ,,	Red-orange.	Purple-grey.	Purple-grey.
	Pink madder ,,	Pink-orange.	Purple.	Purple.
	Lamp black ,,	Dull green.	Pure grey.	Dark cold grey.
	*Vermilion ,,	Rich red-orange.	Red-grey.	Reddish grey.
	Mars orange ,,	Yellow-orange.	Orange-grey.	Grey-green.
	Cadmium yellow ,,			

* These three pigments are only occasionally useful.

The want of perfection in pigments of the three primary colours, which has already been noticed, makes it necessary to employ so many pigments as are given in this table. We have four different sorts of yellow,—Indian yellow, gamboge, yellow ochre, and cadmium yellow; three different sorts of red,—light red, pink madder, and vermilion; three different sorts of blue,—ultramarine, French-blue, and indigo; and the naturally broken colours, burnt sienna, burnt umber, Vandyke brown, sepia, and brown madder*.

Colours naturally divide themselves into the *warm* and *bright*, at the head of which are Indian yellow and gamboge; the *aerial* or *atmospheric*, at the head of which are ultramarine and French blue; and the *cold* and *dark*, at the head of which is indigo. No pigments that we possess, fit for general purposes, are brighter and warmer than Indian yellow and gamboge; none more aerial than ultramarine or French-blue; and none colder or more intensely dark than indigo. All other warm, aerial, cold or dark colours are but modifications of these colours, which, on account of their natural separation, are placed at the head of each column of the compounds in which their respective character prevails. Thus all the colours in column 2 are warm; in column 3, aerial; and in column 4, cold or dark. None of the dark colours in column 1 are positively cold.

Though, in the preceding table, the pigments are only combined in pairs, yet it is not to be understood that the student is restricted to such combinations; the object in giving them has been to show, in the most simple manner, the result of warm, aerial, and cold pigments when combined with those in column 1. If blue and yellow are combined, the beauty and purity of both colours are destroyed, and a green is produced. The addition of the third primary colour, red, makes a red-green, or a grey, accordingly as the red or blue predominates; thus the combination of the three colours is always destructive of the purity of each.

Though blue enters into the composition of burnt umber, it is not in

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* Every pigment of a broken colour, such as burnt umber, burnt sienna, or any other colour which is dark or grey, must be composed of the three primary colours. The darkness or coldness of the broken colours is owing to the presence of blue, as in burnt umber: that it is not green is owing to the presence of red; that it is not purple is owing to the presence of yellow; that it is not orange is owing to the presence of blue; and thus with burnt sienna, burnt umber, Vandyke brown, brown madder, and sepia.

sufficient quantity to cause it to appear grey; but by the addition of French blue we have a grey, warm or cold in proportion to the quantity of blue we have added. If grey of a redder tinge be required, then brown madder must be substituted for the burnt umber; or we may use light red, or pink madder, accordingly as we desire it to incline towards purple. If, on the other hand, we wish it to be still warmer, that is, a yellower grey than can be obtained by a mixture with burnt umber, we then exchange the latter for burnt sienna; so that every variety of grey which we could possibly require may be obtained by the mixture of not more than two pigments.

When about to prepare our colours, we ought first to consider whether the particular colour required be warm, aerial, or cold. If *warm*, it must be of Indian yellow or gamboge, subdued by a mixture with some other colour in column 1, according to the tone towards which we wish the yellow to incline; as, for instance, with light red for an orange, or with sepia for a colour inclining to green; if *aerial*, it must be of French-blue, subdued in like manner; for grey, inclining to purple, with brown madder; for a pure grey, with lamp black; for a red grey, with light red; and for a yellow grey, with burnt umber. If we require a *cold* colour, we may be certain that indigo will enter into its composition. If, however, we require a merely *dark* colour, it does not necessarily follow that indigo must be its basis.

A practice of always using indigo to obtain dark colours would inevitably lead to blackness and absolute coldness, both repulsive to our natural feelings, and opposed to the light and warmth of nature. Indeed there is rarely any occasion, except such as I shall presently explain, for us to have recourse to it. As the darkness of the naturally broken colours is owing to the presence of blue in their composition, we have only to use these naturally dark colours, when we desire a colour to be dark, taking the colder or warmer from among them as our necessities require; thus, besides avoiding blackness, we obtain depth without coldness, as well as purity, since we can thus use these pigments without mixture with any other. They may also serve for cool or warm colours, accordingly as we prefer the coolest or warmest from among them, or make them assume a colder or a warmer hue by association with colder or warmer colours. By thus using these pigments singly, the great essential of purity is preserved, on account of their tendency to call our attention to them as mere pigments, unless, by association with other colours, they be made to assume a hue cold or warm.

The broken greens necessary to landscape are the only colours which require the mixture of more than two pigments. Of all colours, green, in all its varieties, is the most difficult to deal with. As it is on green that we depend for imparting a sense of freshness, a grey inclining to green, such as is formed of indigo and light red, is fresher than a grey composed of French blue and light red. Nature presents but little pure green, except in spring; and at this season, although she looks fresh and cheerful, she is rarely chosen for pictorial representation, on account of the want of variety in the colour of the foliage and grass. The green of spring, however, is modified in its intensity, from the various causes which influence and vary all colours. When in autumn the greens are broken into yellow-greens and red-greens, we then have them in every possible variety, but though then most inviting to the painter, they are still difficult to imitate; for, as the purity of green must be much broken, there is danger of losing its freshness by the addition of too much red.

From the table* of binary mixtures, which I have previously given, it will be perceived that a green tone of colour is produced by the combination of sepia and Indian yellow; but, as there is not enough blue in the sepia to produce a green perfectly fresh, the addition of indigo is required for this purpose. As in the combinations of Indian yellow, or gamboge, with all the other pigments, in the column 1, yellow may be made to predominate, an addition of blue to any of these will, of course, produce a colour more or less green according to the quantity of blue added. By the mixture of the pigments, as pointed out in the table, provision is made for broken colours of every kind.

Before proceeding to the consideration of harmony of colours, it will be necessary that the student should have made himself master of what has been previously said at pages 120 and 121, respecting the effect of their contrasts.

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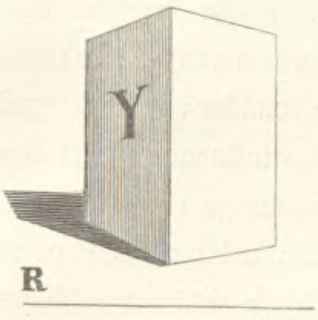
* The student should practically convince himself of the results of the combinations enumerated in this table, by mixing the colours himself. This will, in a short time, accustom him to decide readily on the various tones of colour procurable by these means. He should begin by taking from his box of colours, first, French blue, and then light red; placing them apart on his paper, he should, whilst they are in a fluid state, gradually bring them together: by this means he will see many varieties of colour, resulting from the admixture of these two pigments as they gradually unite, and so on with the rest.

It has already been observed that brown madder, or any other broken colour, must be composed of the three primaries. Now, as the quantity of blue in this colour—which gives it darkness—is brought out by opposition with orange, whilst the red and yellow which enter into its composition accord and harmonise with the red and yellow which compose the orange, and as the same effects take place with broken colours of every kind, we must, in order to obtain harmonious colour in a picture, have a considerable proportion of broken colours. The primary colour prevalent in any composite or broken colour necessarily harmonises with that of the same kind prevalent in another composite or broken colour. Thus in broken tones of colour there always must be harmony more or less; and this harmony ought to be kept up throughout the whole picture, either in cold or warm colours, accordingly as the picture may be painted in what may be called "the minor, or the major mode." To give additional value to the harmony of the broken colours, it is, however, necessary to contrast them with the positive colours afforded by the drapery of figures, by animals and other objects.

In subjects of figures, all positive colours, such as are used in the draperies, require to be repeated in smaller quantities in the accessories, and on opposite sides of the picture; but if the colours of the draperies be broken colours, they need no special repetition, as they are repeated in the broken colours of the shadows around.

Another important aid in the production of harmony is reflexion; but for this, the colours of all objects would be separated and opposed by the blackness and coldness of the shades and shadows, which to a certain extent would not only be destructive of harmony, but also of warmth and light. Without reflexion, few colours could be made to harmonise, whilst with its aid even opposite colours are brought into agreeable union.

The force of reflexion is most evident on the shaded sides of objects: cast shadows, however, are but little, if at all, altered by it, except in the open air, where, in general, they are affected by the cool colours of the sky. The colour of the shaded side of an object depends on two circumstances, first, on the colour of the object itself, and secondly, on the colour of that which casts the reflexion. If Y be the shaded side of a yellow object, and R a red object reflecting both light and colour, the reflexion will first have the effect of diminishing the shade, and then of rendering Y of an orange hue, dependent severally on the strength of the red of R and the yellow of Y; but however intense these colours may be, the brightness of the colour at Y will only incline towards orange, on account of the shade dimming its brightness and purity. The pigments orange and black in combination would afford the colour.



Again, supposing the object reflected on at B to be of a broken colour, composed of the three primaries, but with a preponderance of yellow, and the other object, R, reflecting its colour on the shaded side of B, to be also of a broken colour, but with a preponderance of blue, then a colour inclining to green would be found at B.—It is not necessary to multiply examples; the student must observe for himself; and from the most familiar objects he may learn a useful lesson *, when once taught how to observe.

This operation of colours on each other by reflexion, forms a very important consideration in the study of colours; it is this which gives such complexity to colour. On the light sides of objects it is comparatively easy to see what their colours are, as they are affected by the light only; but on the shaded sides we have both reflected light and colour, modified or changed according to the colour or colours prevalent in the object receiving and reflecting the colour, and the force of the shade in degrading and changing it. The colours of the shaded sides of objects are, therefore, more difficult to imitate than their illumined parts.

By taking advantage of the naturally broken colours, so as to make one the shadow to another, we preserve light and richness, and avoid the risk of coldness and blackness from the use of too much blue. For instance, yellow

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* One of the most simple is to cover six cubes severally with yellow, red, blue, green, orange, and purple paper, and others with papers of broken colours, warm and cold: placing these in sunshine and in juxta-position, and combining them in every possible manner, the student, by observing their effects, and trying to imitate them with his pigments, will gain more real knowledge of colour, than he could learn from any dogmas, although deduced from the practice of this or that old master.

ochre, a dark and broken yellow, may serve, when requisite, for the shaded side of an object whose local colour is bright yellow. In the same manner, for the shaded side of an object whose local colour is not brighter than yellow ochre, burnt sienna, burnt umber, or Vandyke brown may serve; and so the shade of vermilion may be light red or brown madder; of light red, brown madder, and so on. All, however, depends on the influence of reflected light and colour: the object of what is here said is to encourage the student to avail himself of the richness of the naturally broken colours, and never to have recourse to blue, so long as he can obtain depth without coldness. Blue is the poison of pleasing colour.

These remarks, which have no reference to the effects of atmosphere, are strictly applicable to water-colours only, where the white of the paper shines through the colours. The principle, however, is equally important and necessary to oil; and to carry it out there, the shaded sides and shadows of near objects should first be painted of a paler and colder colour than would be eventually required, so that the necessary warmth may be afterwards given by passing over them burnt sienna, burnt umber, Vandyke brown, brown madder, or any other of the transparent colours, accordingly as each might be appropriate.

Of the broken colours, the warmest are those which have the most yellow in their composition, as burnt sienna and burnt umber; and the coldest are such as have the greatest quantity of blue, as sepia and brown madder. As we are indebted to the contrast of forms and qualities for the expression of motion or rest, roughness or smoothness, so are we in like manner indebted to the contrast of colours for the expression of warmth or coldness; and in proportion as colours are violently contrasted, so are these expressions forcible beyond the natural power of any colour singly to express. Thus we extend the powers of the pigments by making each more brilliant, intense, warm, or cold—more yellow, red, or blue.

Warm colours in nature are abundantly distributed—cold, in comparison, sparingly; and as we are adapted to Nature, and Nature to us, warm colours are more agreeable than cold. Flowers, which display so great a variety of beautiful colours, afford a proof of this; there are few of a cold colour, fewer still that are positively blue, and these never large; whilst those which are yellow, orange, and red, of every conceivable shade, are numerous, and often very large. As two of the primary colours out of three are warm, I should say that warm colours ought to prevail in a picture, provided they be not inconsistent with the sentiment; and that blue—especially positive blue—should be very sparingly used.

These remarks, however, are to be understood with limitations, for much depends on the sentiment we would express by colour. Yet even here, among pictures we naturally prefer the light, warm, and cheerful, to the dark, cold, and gloomy; apart from the sentiments which they inspire, they are pleasanter to look upon,—just as the bright and cheerful sunlight is preferable to cheerless obscurity.

It is not only the warmth or the coldness of colours that we have to regard: at the same time that they differ in being warmer or colder, they also differ in the *strength* of colour; some may be of a pale yellow, pale red, or pale blue; others may possess deeper tones of the same colours in their composition. *Herein is the light-and-shade of colour.* Thus, when objects are so combined as to differ not only in being cold or warm, but also in the depth or intensity of their respective colours, we obtain a complete and distinct idea of each; we have then the difference in the light-and-shade of colour which is properly expressive of one object, being distinct and separate from another.

This property of the light-and-shade of colour is of the greatest consequence towards obtaining richness of colour: without it we have poverty of colour, and a want of separation, as well as a want of the distinct forms of objects. Hence, to the landscape-painter, autumn, with its rich, warm, and varied colours, is the most favourable season; the universal green of spring, alike in depth and tone, is then exchanged for colour of every variety and intensity, greens, yellows, and reds; and in the combination of the various kinds of foliage, or of other objects, he avails himself to the utmost of this variety, to aid him in separating one from another.

In a picture, which we pronounce to be badly coloured, we are never sensible of any hues of colour; and in one which is poor in colour, we find that, whatever may be the difference of colour in its various objects, warm or cold, their light parts are of the same degree of brightness—or rather paleness—though their shades and shadows may be of unequal depth. In Nature we esteem those assemblages beautiful, which present us with difference of strength as well as variety of colour.

When the illumined parts of objects are warm, their shades are less warm; whilst those whose illuminated parts are cold have their shaded parts less cold; for example, the shaded parts of an orange-coloured object would be degraded by black, and no force of reflexion could restore its purity; whilst a blue, grey, or white object, in shadow, would be warmed by reflexion to the extent of the warmth of the neighbouring and surrounding objects.

To each division of art—form, composition, light-and-shade, and colour—belong properties not possessed by another; and whilst each has a field peculiar to itself, it also adds its inherent or exclusive powers to the powers of others, so that the whole in combination shall affect the mind in the greatest degree.

This is a powerful argument for a previous knowledge of form, composition, and light-and-shade—which are in fact the foundation and preparation for the exercise of colour. Let the student for a moment think how many considerations claim his attention, if, when attempting colour, he be as yet imperfectly acquainted with form and light-and-shade. Suppose him to be painting a figure: he first thinks of the appropriate colour; then of the mixture which may be necessary to obtain it; and when applying it he has to judge of its relation with other colours, whether it is light enough or dark enough, or of the required hue, or whether it is too cold or too warm; and then he has to remember the form and muscular development, dependant on the action. To say that it is utterly impossible for the mind to give equal attention to all these things at once, is to utter a truism. The judgment and feeling required cannot be exercised on so many things at the same time, and be successful.

If Form enables us to distinguish one object from another; if Composition affords the charms resulting from congregated beauties acting on each other; and Light-and-shade enables us to understand the surfaces of objects, and their several distances, it is to Colour we are chiefly indebted for the amplitude of space, or any approximation to effulgent light: I say approximation, for the painter's utmost efforts are at best only that; light-and-shade, or mere modifications of black and white, will suggest some idea of light; and the addition of colour, on the same principles, will suggest it yet more forcibly;

but what are their utmost powers, when compared with the smallest ray of "living light?" White paper or white paint, the materials the nearest to light in our possession, are substance and shadow compared to a sunbeam. It is something to accomplish the gleam which has found its way among the leaves of the vine, and through the cottage-window on to the floor, and that we can trace its influence within such narrow limits; but how much more is achieved when we are made to feel the influence of light pervading the space over which the eye ranges in a landscape, where every prominent feature, emerging from the shade, comes "glowing into day?"

The principles of form and light-and-shade are much more simple in their application than those of colour; for, though colour is subject to certain laws, yet, in its *perfection*, it is on the whole the result of pure feeling.

That colour in art is most beautiful and delightful there can be no doubt, and that it is generally most seductive, is equally indisputable; but if its charms too early or too much engage the student's attention, he will be very likely to neglect all the higher and more solid pre-requisites, which must first be understood before colour can be effectively superadded: charmed, however, by its universal influence, all are apt to over-estimate its value.

"Colour is the sunshine of art." It is a grand adjunct in the expression of space, as well as of light and atmosphere; it helps us to range from the turf we tread on to the "blue vault of heaven." Colour in art is the language of sentiment; and is more especially addressed to the feelings. It gives us the hue of health, the languor of sickness, and the pallor of death. It gives us the verdure of spring, and the rich and mellow tints of autumn,—the sultry glow of summer, and the icy gale of winter: the freshness of the cool glade, or the burning heat of the sandy plain. Though the *fascinations* of the painter's art lie in colour, yet the great essentials consist of form, composition, and light-and-shade; the latter may be comprehended alone; but colour, unaccompanied by these, is incapable of conveying a single idea.

I would not be understood to undervalue the importance of colour:—that it so universally captivates is sufficient evidence of its value and its consequence as an object of study: but I would caution the student against its allurements, before he is prepared to effectively apply it, by a thorough knowledge of form, composition, and light-and-shade. Notwithstanding that colour is so influential in its appeal to the feelings, and is so entirely subservient to their gratification, yet some of the tenderest emotions as well as the grandest may be excited without it. Do the Cartoons of Raphael fail to impress the mind, because they are so little assisted by its blandishments? or do sculpture and engraving appeal to us in vain, unless invested with its fascinations?

We look at prints with feelings of pleasure excited by beauty of form, composition, and light-and-shade, independent of colour. These would unquestionably have increased influence from the addition of colour; but could such colours as might be appropriate to any print be placed before us, on a separate surface, they would fail to afford us any gratification whatever: they would mean nothing.

Of all the departments of art, colour, in its beauty, appears to be least dependant on knowledge. Natural feelings, however, are as likely to be wrong in the case of colour, as in any other department of art, unless they be corrected by knowledge. The trouble of sifting the useful from the useless has turned many aside, or has led them to trust to what their feelings might accomplish under the influence of practice and example; whilst others have contented themselves with scattered hints and facts. The general repugnance to study dry, elaborate, and abstruse dissertations on colour, has tended to keep artists very much in the dark, with respect to the science of colour, and the extent to which it may be the handmaid of art. Although we have seen that colour is submissive to certain laws, yet their operation cannot be readily comprehended, or felt, unless the student have "an eye for colour." Rules for colour can neither be so precisely given, nor so easily followed as those of form, composition, and light-and-shade: we may be able to decide positively on the form of an object, or of its light-and-shade; but it may be of any colour, unless it be a direct contradiction of nature, such as a blue rose, a red swan, or a yellow horse. We do not see the primary colours anywhere but in the drapery of figures, in the plumage of birds, and in flowers. Though the colours of these objects, when viewed separately and near at hand, may be definitely expressed in words,—such as the "purple robe," the "pink rose," or the "yellow canary,"—yet when modified by distance, light-and-shade, and reflexion, they assume hues so varied as to defy verbal description.

This is a great impediment in the way of affording instruction in colour, besides others which must ever remain insuperable. In the first place it is impossible to provide all the necessary examples, inasmuch as it would require that coloured pictures, not *prints*, should be set before the student; unless prints, indeed, could be made, as regards colour, first-rate works of art. The manner in which they are produced, however, renders this impossible; at the very best, they would afford the student no satisfactory notion of the beauty, refinement, and sentiment of colour. But supposing that it were in my power to put coloured pictures before him, it would be impossible for me to produce what might be considered perfect either by myself or by others; and as his own feelings could not be at first, either in kind, intensity, or amount, on a level with mine, they would accordingly lead him to suspect that my examples were in error, on the side of either gaudiness, brightness, coldness, or heaviness. In short, judging by his own feelings, predilections, and dispositions, he would select for imitation such as he found most in harmony with them; and as they must ever influence him, the most that can be done is to direct him in their exercise.

As colouring in its excellence depends on the delicacy of our natural and acquired susceptibility, which many circumstances may contribute to render to-day more acute, to-morrow more feeble, notwithstanding that the feelings may be in accordance with principles that are not liable to fluctuation; and as the relative merit of colouring in a picture is owing to its being consistent and in harmony with the nature of the subject, it is evidently quite impossible to set up any standard of perfect colour.

To insist on a particular kind of colouring, would be as unreasonable as to insist on the subject to which it is to be applied. To make all persons colour alike, they must first be made to think and feel alike. For these reasons, it would be an equal mistake to set up any one of the Old Masters as the great exemplar of colour. Murillo, Titian, Veronese, Rubens, and others, have each in turn been held up for imitation as colourists, and the practice of each has been supposed to have been founded on principles,—as if the beauty of colour to be found in their works, which proceeded from their different feelings, and even in some degree from their peculiar manipulation, were the result of some definite principle! The varieties of colour in the works of these great men, each right in his way, may be ascribed to their peculiarity of mind and feelings; each exhibiting his own views of Nature, and observing those general principles appertaining to colour which none could infringe and at the same time excel.

Titian and Rubens differed by reason of their different constitutions of mind and feelings; and it is not more servile nor more ridiculous in us to adopt their class of subjects, or their peculiar treatment, than it would be to adopt their costume, and to "make up" our persons as well as our pictures, so that they also may reflect our model. This would be grovelling in search of their foot-prints, instead of nobly aspiring to reach the same goal by the same road.

The Dutch and Flemish have left us exquisite examples of colour. In the sensitiveness and susceptibility of their feelings, in appreciation and production of beautiful colour, they were on a level with the Italians, though the latter were above them in the better use they made of it on nobler subjects. We may go to all for examples of beautiful colour,—always allowing for "time's effacing fingers,"—because in their feelings they were more nearly alike by nature; but for all the higher qualifications of art, dependent on the exercise of the higher powers of judgment and imagination, we should study in the school where such powers are most displayed.

We may derive valuable lessons of colour from our contemporaries as well as from our predecessors; we may see all using with powerful effect what we ourselves may have scarcely noticed, or overlooked altogether. But though, by the study of works ancient or modern, we may learn what is most worthy of our attention either in art or nature, and perceive the force and beauty of colour when it conforms to, and aids the sentiment proper to the subject, yet to escape the bondage of a servile imitation of the works of any individual painter, we must go to nature herself: it is only from her that we can be furnished with infinite variety of examples; she has ever some new and pleasing combinations to offer to us; some powerful and impressive exhibitions of colour and sentiment. She may be defective in form, and in combinations of form, but in colour she is faultless. Light and atmosphere, which reconcile and amalgamate all colours, or combinations of colour, are in her perfect; and art, having neither, must ever follow at an humble distance, and would scarcely exceed "decent debility," were it not for the power to bring her rare and scattered examples of beauty into combination.

The most apparently unsurmountable and disheartening difficulties in colouring from Nature, and, above all, out-of-doors,* arise from our inability to bring home to our minds any decided notion of the colours which we see, and have been attracted by. All are dependent on association. All are comparative. Do we call this grey? How many greys, differing in their tones of colour, are we surrounded by, coming under the general term of grey, but so different in kind as to be undefinable by any terms? Is it warm grey, or cool grey? one possessing discoverable traces of red or yellow, more or less, in combination with blue? and will the terms yellow-grey or red-grey serve to explain the infinite hues and changes of that colour? or can any powers of language serve to fix our ideas of the various gradations and tones of a colour which we designate as grey? At this moment we call it a warm grey, at the next cold, because, from its altered relations, it now makes a different impression on our feelings, in kind and degree.

Various as all our pigments are, who shall decide which among them is best suited to express our particular feelings? Each has its particular hue, and each may, according to our notions, aid us to attain more or less the colour we seek. Our own feelings are the umpires. Why else do we see a painter preferring one colour to another, or doating on what some one else has abandoned as useless, or nearly so? Each has not only his favourite colour, but his favourite tones or hues of colour, and rejoices in obtaining certain combinations which others look upon with indifference, or disregard altogether. All this variety of opinion, this difference of choice, has its origin in the feelings and in the construction of the eye itself. In colouring, therefore, we can only offer to the student combinations of such a kind, as may bring him within reachable distance of the fascinating and wondrous beauty of colours in Nature, when he essays their likeness; and, in giving the table

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* There can be no doubt that colouring out-of-doors, as in landscape, is in the highest degree difficult, in consequence of the brightness of light, the extension of space, and the effects of atmosphere; which affect all the colours we see in an unlimited degree.

at page 126, my object has been to afford him such aid. On his picture, rather than on his palette, he must look for those hues of colour, whose charms in Nature have allured him to attempt their imitation.

Our appreciation of colour depends greatly on our peculiar constitution; to some yellow, or red, is more agreeable; to others green, or even blue. Pictures which to some would appear true and pleasing, to others would appear dull and monotonous; pictures perfectly true in colour, one grave and sombre, the other cheerful and bright, might each be pronounced wrong, according to the feeling of the persons viewing them. If, therefore, this feeling be not regulated and improved by knowledge, there can be no such thing as a just decision. In order that our estimation of colour may not be warped by prejudice or ignorance, it is necessary that we should be acquainted with its laws and properties. In the choice of a subject, natural predilections are shown; one person will prefer the gentler, another the sterner passions; one will choose a battle, another a village festival; one would dwell for ever in a town, "to catch the living manners as they rise;" another would prefer the country, and paint landscape: and thus it is with colour. Different painters see the colour of Nature differently, and represent her as differently. Need we go beyond one exhibition in proof of this? Side by side are pictures—I allude more particularly to landscapes—whose hues of colour are as different as are the names of the painters; and so much do certain hues prevail in the works of some painters, that it is possible instantly, and from a distance, to name their authors.

Objects, as they recede from us, being subject, in landscape, to the operation of light, more or less vivid, according to the time of the day, or the state of the atmosphere, are subdued and modified by these causes into those innumerable hues which the utmost skill of the painter can but faintly imitate. Without the aid of bright yellow and red colours we should find little of light in a picture; and without blue we should receive at best but a feeble idea of atmosphere. What is called "keeping" in a picture, is dependant on the tone of colour being in perfect accordance with the presumed distance of objects as expressed by size, and affected by light-and-shade, reflexion, and atmosphere.

The varieties of colour are extremely complex, owing to the nature of the object, the kind of illumination, and the force of reflexion; and cannot be more easily followed than all the various details of rocks and trees and herbage. Direct imitation is here again at fault. If there were degrees of impossibility, one might say that direct imitation of the colours of Nature is yet more impossible than the imitation of any of her other characteristics.

Direct imitation in colour, is even more feeble than in light and shade. Hobbima and Rysdael did much in this way; and for it sacrificed the higher attainments of light and atmosphere. These painters, and others of the same school, though excelling in point of colour, are deficient in beauty of a higher kind. In form, in light and shade, as well as in choice of subject, their works —so far as I am acquainted with them—are seldom above mediocrity, often below it, especially Hobbima's; and this must ever be the case where art is brought down to mere mechanical exactitude, towards which good eyes and plenty of patience are the indispensable qualifications. This endeavour to imitate—I would rather say to mock—the colour of Nature, tends continually to blackness in the shadows; for when painting from Nature, feeling our inability to express, by direct means, the brightness of light, we avail ourselves of the natural darkness of our pigments to gain some expression of light by opposition of shade; and thus we falsify the shades by making them too dark. Nearly all the old masters forced the shadows, so that the contrast might give the required brightness to the light.

To give impressions of atmosphere and light is the peculiar province of colour; but as the brightest of our pigments, however, even white, the brightest, —or white paper—falls far short of light, whilst our dark pigments naturally incline to shade, there is consequently great danger of our relying too much on the natural strength of the dark pigments, to compensate for the feeble approach to light in the bright ones by increasing the depth of the shades and shadows, so that the contrast shall make the light parts look brighter, and more expressive of light. As all dark colours owe their depth to the presence of blue, such a practice must lead to coldness and heaviness. The excess of depth in the shades makes, indeed, the lights appear brighter; but as it is productive of coldness, it obliges us to reduce their warmth below that of nature, by subduing the yellow and red in them; as they otherwise would appear gaudy, in contrast with the quantity of blue in the shades and shadows. If we unconsciously yield to the impression on our feelings, and our preference for warm colours, then the too great quantity of blue in the shades and shadows forces us to the complemental colours, and we paint the lights, either of their natural warmth, or of a compensatory degree of warmth, and the inevitable consequence is gaudiness. If the warmth in the light parts be subdued to avoid gaudiness, the whole picture gradually descends to chilling coldness and heaviness, and there is loss of light and atmosphere.

In the employment of colour, so as to gain the expression of light, it becomes a question of importance, whether it will be most expedient to risk gaudiness or blackness. Gaudiness, however, is not an invariable consequence of the use of bright colours, although blackness, coldness, and dinginess, are always inseparable from a free use of dark and, consequently, cold pigments. The wish to obtain light by contrast of dark, and at the same time to avoid gaudiness, frequently induces the use of dark pigments, which naturally bring coldness and heaviness. On the other hand, to force the expression of light from the bright pigments, by daring to employ them in their utmost power, in contrast with such a degree of shade as shall always fall far short of blackness or coldness, is to achieve a triumph.

When colour is expressive of sun-light, its power in this respect is due in some measure to the contrast of light and dark colours, but more especially to the combination and opposition of cold and warm colours. Light itself is a concentration of the primary colours. An indifferently coloured picture, whose darkest shades are many degrees short of black, will give an incomparably better idea of light than is to be obtained from any print, however excellent, though its lights and shades may range from pure white to positive black.

A practice founded on the authority of the prism, and with a similar arrangement of colours, has been attempted. The expression of light, or at least so much of it as may be within the reach of our present limited materials, may indeed be effected by this practice; but then propriety would often be sacrificed by giving to objects, not such colours as they are known to possess, but such as correspond with the place they take in a general prismatic arrangement, where the picture is divided into red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet: accordingly, objects under this general arrangement would often be forced to assume colours very far from such as we recognise them by in nature. This is certainly a bold and most effective mode of attaining the expression of light; but our satisfaction in this respect is very likely to be counterbalanced by contradictions, which no pencil, however illusive, could reconcile or persuade us to accept as truths.

It appears, then, that perfection is not to be attained, either by close and confined imitation of colour, or by releasing ourselves from such trammels, to indulge in hypotheses of colour in the abstract. By the one practice half the colour is lost in blackness; by the other, the extravagance of colour would be frequently opposed to the convictions of our senses.

The effect of the atmosphere on all colours is to dim their brightness or reduce their strength, by its own hue and opacity; and it thus renders the the most remote objects of one uniform colour. This effect of the atmosphere is most apparent on the shaded sides of objects, and on shadows, which appear more blue accordingly as the atmosphere is less charged with vapour. The colour of the sky will best illustrate the effect of atmosphere; over our heads, when viewed from the level ground, on a clear day, it appears of a deep blue colour; from elevated situations, of a deeper blue; and from the summit of the Alps, still more intense. The shadowed parts of distant mountains, in a temperate climate, are of a grey, warmed by the yellow rays of light, acting on the semi-opaque atmosphere; in the torrid zone, where the atmosphere is more transparent, they are of a blue, inclining to purple.

Nature is full of light and warmth, and colour. The most distant shadows are not a positive blue, nor are the nearest black. The atmosphere, while it renders the distant shades and shadows paler, more tender, and more blue, also imparts to them a portion of the warmth which it receives from the sunlight, giving even to the most distant a tinge of yellow. Gradually as the objects approach us, their own natural colour, yellow, red, green, or orange, appears more distinctly through the grey of the atmosphere; and thus shades and shadows become of a yellow, red, green, or orange-grey. When the objects are so near that atmosphere has no longer any perceptible influence over shades and shadows, we then see their darkness subdued by reflected light and colour.

To obtain the expression of atmosphere we are dependant on blue, which is apt to lead to coldness; the more so, as the most distant objects frequently require a blue almost pure, although its intensity may be moderated by white, according to circumstances, for the most distant shades and shadows are never of so pure a blue as the sky; they are moderated, that is to say, warmed by the sun-lit atmosphere. When all the aerial greys of the distant shades and shadows have traces of warmth, they have light in proportion; and by superior warmth in the lights, and by force of opposition, we can make these greys look greyer, and therefore more distant. By thus increasing the *hue* of blue, which is the naturally retiring colour, we, in effect, obtain the expression of atmosphere and coolness, without positive blue and coldness.

To obviate, on the one hand, the gaudiness which might result from the free use of warm and bright pigments, and, on the other, to prevent the coldness and blackness, which are the effect of a free use of the blue and dark pigments, it is necessary to subdue all in deference to the various influences of light, shade, reflexion, and atmosphere. The greys which hence result, not only contribute to the expression of atmosphere, but also, by the contrast of their coolness and freshness, enhance the warm and light parts of the picture. They are perfect when, in the extreme distance, they have just so much blue as is short of coldness, and just so much yellow as may make them seem warm without destroying their freshness. As the expression of light comes from the use of bright colours and the expression of atmosphere from such as are subdued and aerial, we consequently, in the composition, provide for the immediate opposition, in some part or other of the picture, of the nearest and the most distant objects, so that we may thus obtain the most forcible expression of atmosphere and space by contrast of colour. When the foreground objects are figures or animals, on which we can employ rich positive colours, in opposition to the delicate and aerial colours of the distance, the contrast then more especially makes the rich appear still richer, and the aerial more distant.—These remarks relate exclusively to landscape painting; in the other departments, aerial colours, as expressive of atmosphere are of minor consideration.

No system of colour could be presented, accurately adapted to the expression of every varied sentiment which colour is capable of impressing or awakening. This must depend on the student choosing for himself such a general tone of colour as shall best accord with the nature of his subject. He must give to objects such colours as may be appropriate to them under all the changes of light, atmosphere, weather, or time of day, and look for them, not in any particular pigment or combination of pigments, but in those hues of which I have endeavoured to make him sensible.

The student, in reviewing what has been said on colour, will find that its principles, as applicable to painting, are in perfect harmony with those which relate to form, composition, and light-and-shade; that in every case minor individual peculiarities are to be relinquished for those general characteristics which come home to the mind, and leave there a durable impression. In single objects the delineation of their precise form is made subservient to the expression of their qualities and generic beauty; in composition the accidental combination of objects, as presented by Nature, yields to an arrangement which, by contrast or by opposition, causes their distinctive forms and qualities to be more clearly perceived; light-and-shade is made subservient to the expression of solidity, surface, and space; and in the department of colour, the local colour of individual objects is made subservient to the general expression of light and atmosphere. Thus, form, composition, light-and-shade, and colour, should all minister in subservience to that general sentiment which, in every stage of his picture, should be the chief object of the artist's regard.

There are too many difficulties attending the practice of art for the student, however great his abilities, to contend with and overcome all at once. His only plan, therefore, is to take them one by one, and to advance step by step. He should first make a sketch, or rather several sketches, of the composition, at the same time considering the light-and-shade: he has already seen that these must be studied together. He must decide on the place of the principal light in his picture, and also on the principal dark; determine the position of the chief features; on the broad masses of light-and-shade, and their quantities and intensities; all these he must do, without for a moment disturbing himself about details. An example of a study of this kind will be found in Plate 15, No. 2.

When these are arranged, and he is satisfied that no parts repeat each other either in intensity, quantity, or form, and that he has succeeded in leading the eye to the principal object, he may consider that the true foundation is laid. When this is done, he makes another sketch, in which he combines the details with the light-and-shade and composition. Colour only remains to be added, and for this he makes a separate study of his subject, leaving out all minute details of form, and all delicate gradations of colour; attending only to the masses of colour, united with the masses of light-and-shade, and to the position, intensity, and brightness of the positive colours. Looking at his sketch from a distance, with regard to the general effect only, all its crudities will be unseen. In the progress of his preparatory sketches he can make such changes as he may consider requisite, according to the difficulties which may present themselves in the different stages of his work; and the altered and amended sketches will serve as memoranda for his future guidance. However toilsome this preparation may appear, it yet eventually saves time, and leads to excellence; for the confidence which the student acquires, in thus studying his subject in its different relations of composition, light-and-shade, and colour, enables him to complete his picture with greater facility and power.

This practice is the more necessary in water-colours, on account of the power to change the form, position, or colour of objects being limited. Light colours cannot readily be placed where dark ones have previously occupied the paper, as it frequently becomes so stained by the strength of the colours, that they cannot be effaced without destroying its surface; and if the student make many changes, all transparency of colour is lost, and dinginess and "woolliness" supervene. When he begins to paint a picture without having previously studied, in separate sketches, the effect of its several primary components, every step he takes, so far from affording a prospect of success, seems but to lead to inevitable failure. At length, weary of working without hope, he relinquishes his purpose as unattainable, though his want of success be entirely owing to his not having prepared himself for his task.

CHAPTER VIII.

DRAWING FROM NATURE.

IT may probably seem strange that I leave this section of my subject to the last. I have, however, taken this course, from a conviction that it is time wasted to go to nature with eyes which, as yet, have not been prepared to see her beauties. Sketches or studies from nature, made without a knowledge of her laws and of the principles of art, can only be either elaborate or slovenly failures. Drawing from nature does not necessarily imply that we shall intuitively see in her what it is essential to observe with reference to art.

As almost every remark relating to art made in the preceding chapters has reference to nature, a separate notice of this subject here might seem to be superfluous. My object, however, is to thus more emphatically give the student to understand that all which I have endeavoured to teach him in the preceding chapters is but preliminary to studying and drawing from nature,—is but as a means to the grand end of forcibly depicting and embodying her beauties. For an artist to derive the greatest advantage from the study of nature in the aggregate, it is necessary that he should not only have a previous knowledge of her details, but also of their pictorial value both relatively and singly; and to represent her efficiently by means of art, he must have not only a previous knowledge of its principles, but also facility in applying them. It must not be concluded, from what I have previously said of mere mechanical imitation, that my object is to depreciate the value of accuracy and truthfulness in individual likeness, as a means of conveying a correct idea of an object, and of exciting sentiments naturally associated with it. The student, in avoiding the littleness of fac-simile imitation, must take heed lest he fall into the opposite extreme of careless drawing, and vicious or slovenly colouring.

The beauties of nature cannot be represented by incorrect outline, rudely filled up with broad dashes of colour.

It has already been remarked at page 113, that, on viewing any scene, as the eye becomes fixed on any one of the objects, so the images of all around are less distinctly perceived; and that for this reason the principal objects in a picture should be detailed, more especially that which is the most interesting. Now the student who goes to nature, ignorant or forgetful of this, will certainly commit great errors in his endeavours to depict her. When painting from nature he would direct the principal visual ray to each object, and to each part of it in succession, as he is engaged painting from it: in painting a tree, for instance, he would regard every branch, and indeed almost every twig, from the top to the bottom, till he arrived at the root; and thus he would direct his attention to the portraiture of every other object—cattle, figures, rocks, stones, and herbage—until he finally reached the margin of the canvas or paper. Each object in the picture, and each part of it, would, of necessity, be depicted with equal distinctness, and just as he would see it when directing his sight immediately to it; and thus he would have represented nature, as she could only appear to him if he possessed a separate eye and a separate intelligence for each object. This would be painting from nature as he had looked at her in detail, not as she appears to us in a general view.

Plate 24 * may convince the student of the preparation he requires before he can go to nature with advantage. The subject here is Dumbarton on the Clyde. If Example 2 be better than Example 1, it is not from any change that occurred in nature, but is entirely owing to the difference of situation whence the view was taken. If likeness of nature could always satisfy, then these two examples, being equally like nature, would be equally pleasing; but they are not so, and the difference is entirely owing to a knowledge of composition, which gave the power to select whence the view was most agreeable. At almost every step we take, objects vary their relations, and present a different appearance; and nothing but a knowledge of the principles of composition could enable us to decide on the spot whence we might obtain the view best adapted for pictorial representation. As moving objects, which lend an addional interest and variety to the scene, are continually changing their places, it is only by a knowledge of

* See Frontispiece.

composition that we are enabled to arrest them when in the right place with reference to the picture; and without a knowledge of what is required of light-and-shade, we could not tell whether these accessories should be dark or light, as we see them at the moment.

When the student of landscape goes to nature without the necessary preparation, he not unfrequently selects very old pollards, or old oaks with withered branches, as choice examples of the picturesque; and full of his admiration of nature—nothing but nature—he doats on her decrepitude, and neglects her in her prime; he is charmed with the deformities which he can readily copy, but is insensible to the beauties, which as yet he can neither see nor portray.

The student should go to nature for beautiful images and inspirations, and by the study of her works should learn how to judge correctly of the productions of art, ancient or modern. We have had instances of persons, who, in consequence of their blind devotion to some particular master, have chosen their subjects from nature, not as they might be beautiful in her, but accordingly as they afforded opportunity of imitating his manner. This is indeed looking at nature, but with spectacles which show her only in a particular light.

It is of consequence to the student to ascertain what it is in nature that has attracted his attention, or touched his feelings,—whether a casual attitude, expression, or form, whether the composition, light-and-shade, or colour. Unless he define his own sensations, he will fail to bring away a satisfactory study, or employ the proper materials. For want of ascertaining the cause of his pleasure, it frequently happens that the crayon or lead-pencil is used when colour should have been employed; and on the other hand, colours are taken, to the neglect of beautiful form and character, and the student is surprised to find that he has failed to mark the beauty which charmed him. If he cannot define his own sensations, he cannot know how to make impressions on other persons.

He who desires to excel should avail himself of every opportunity of studying nature, and of thus enriching himself from her never-failing abundance. It matters not what his pursuit may be, whether history or landscape, from her he must obtain his ideas. He should be always mindful to make memoranda from her of accessories, incidents, and transient effects of light-and-shade; for as they cannot be commanded when wanted, there should be a store always ready. When the student ceases to refer to nature, and fails to refresh his memory and revive his feelings by looking at her beauties, from that moment he will retrograde.

Those who may have expected to find in this work recipes for making pictures, will, most assuredly, be disappointed;—the secret in art, which will enable its possessor to produce admirable works by the mere exercise of his will, remains yet to be found, and is just as likely to be discovered as the philosopher's stone. For persons desirous of acquiring by such means the character of Artists, I have not written. Excellence in art, properly so called, can only be attained by untiring application, under the stimulus of feeling and the guidance of knowledge.

In art man can effect nothing great or beautiful, without previous study and labour; and his imitations of nature, to be truly admirable, must bear the impress of mind. In viewing a beautiful work of art, we are not so much affected by the faithful imitation of nature which it may display, as we are touched by the sentiment which impelled the artist to produce it: what we thus see is less felt as a copy of nature, than as an embodiment of feelings which nature has inspired.

I have, in a former chapter, said, "If art be an imitation of nature, and if nature herself denies the power of identical imitation, what is that kind of imitation which should be aimed at?" To ascertain this kind of imitation, by an investigation of the principles of nature, and to show how it can be best effected by the means peculiar to art, have been my great objects in this present work. In my endeavour to convey information to the student, it has not been my wish to confine him to my own views, but to enlarge his conceptions both of nature or art, and to enable him to become an intelligible interpreter of his own thoughts and feelings.

I am fully aware that a person may possess himself of the knowledge I have attempted to impart, and may even be able to put it into practice, and yet not be deserving the name of an artist; he may be very industrious, very intelligent, but with very little feeling; just as a man may understand the laws of harmony, and yet be a poor musician, have a true and critical knowledge of language and the laws of verse, and withal no poet: feeling and intelligence go together to form an artist.

APPENDIX.

ON MANIPULATION AND MATERIALS.

THOUGH it be impossible to give a complete idea of the manipulation of a picture by any description, yet, as practical information on the use of materials may be of service to the Student, I have thought it advisable to subjoin a few observations on this subject by way of appendix. They are entirely of a practical nature, and confined to painting in Water Colours.

As blue is the most powerful and also the coldest colour, it is the safest practice to paint too warm rather than too cold in the earlier stages of a picture; so that if we require any change, we may be able to effect it completely and satisfactorily, without losing purity. As blue stains the paper deeply — sometimes indelibly — it is very difficult to remove, even partially; on this account, as a general practice, it is best to pass the cool colours over the warm. If any colour on the picture be, in the first instance, too cold, and at the same time too dark, the warm pigments are too feeble to produce any great change; and colours so produced generally look muddy.

In painting in water-colours, it was formerly the practice to complete the light-and-shade of the picture with grey, generally made of Indian red and indigo—both of which stain the paper deeply—leaving the white paper for light parts which were to be of a bright colour; over this preparation the warm and local colours of all kinds were passed, as well as over the bare paper. The grey, which was used to give the idea of air and shadow, was, in this way, laid under the local colour, and an effort was thus made to imitate nature by a process the direct reverse of her own, where the air and the shadow are over the local colours; that is to say, they are between us and the objects we draw. The consequence of placing cold over warm, or warm over cold colours, may be exemplified by passing indigo over burnt sienna, and burnt sienna over indigo, having the same strength of colour in each case; the two modes produce two perceptibly different colours; and the same result is witnessed when, instead of indigo, a grey is used, such as is produced with French blue and lamp-black.

In painting there are two important objects to be obtained, but to which the nature of water-colours is directly opposed—namely, transparency in the shadows, and opacity in the lights of solid objects. Transparency in the shades and shadows is required, because in nature we look *into* them, and see that something is veiled under their obscurity; whereas we look *upon* the lights, and at once clearly and distinctly, and without effort, recognise every characteristic of an object. To obtain shadow in water-colours, we use the dark pigments to obscure the white paper; and when for the deepest shadows it is necessary to hide it entirely, the dark pigments must be laid on thick. The shadows thus impasted, inevitably appear substantial and opaque: we have endeavoured to obtain a likeness of nature by a process which is diametrically opposed to her, but which, from the imperfection of our materials, is unavoidable. Though this remark especially applies to the deepest shadows, still, gradually as we descend to these, and lose the influence of the white paper shining through every dark pigment, we become sensible of increasing opacity in the shadows, and the gradual contradiction of nature, until we have it in its fullest force. This defect of the materials cannot be avoided, though its influence may be overcome.

The other defect of water-colours is of an entirely opposite nature. In all bright parts—and especially in the brightest—the paper requires to be but very slightly coloured, because in itself it is nearer to light than any of the brightest pigments. Now as in these cases the colour must be very much diluted with water, it must, therefore, be very transparent, and consequently just in those places where we require substance and opacity, we have the extreme of thinness and transparency: here again we have to produce effects and suggest ideas by a process the very reverse of nature. To show the defects consequent on this thinness of the lights, let us consider the bright parts of clouds, and any object in the foreground, such as a stone; both of these, being of a bright warm colour, would be represented by white paper slightly tinged with yellow ochre. Thus two things so different in nature, the one remote vapour, the other near substance, are represented in water-colours by precisely the same means.

These two grand defects—opacity and substance in the deepest shadows, and thinness and transparency in the brightest lights of solid objects—are yet to be effectually remedied by means which I will endeavour to explain: and first of the use of opaque white.* This is an invaluable pigment when rightly employed; and when, in a perfectly opaque state, is applied to the bright lights of draperies, to the bright lights on water especially, to the foam of the sea or falling water, and to any bright and opaque object. It should be mixed with a small portion of Cadmium yellow, so as to bring it to the colour of cream, the consistency of which it should also resemble: in this state it is fit for the brightest lights, and may be reduced by water for the less brilliant. It is necessary to break its extreme whiteness with yellow, as here indicated;

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* This white is a preparation of oxide of zinc, and is also called Chinese white.

for wherever it is only semi-opaque, that is, put on thin, it assumes a bluish hue, and is unfit for glazing, on which depends every beauty we desire to derive from its use.

If the white, when dry and hard, should be found too thick, it may be easily reduced by scraping it with a sharp knife, and this will also free the surface from granulous particles, which sometimes show themselves. This being done, it is then in a condition to be glazed over, that is, any colour we require may be obtained by passing over it any of the pigments, pure or mixed, and made transparent by being diluted with water. By this process we put on the lights as nature does, and thus obtain the strongest lights pure and emphatic.

As in the beginning of a picture, it is impossible to anticipate the position of all the small bright lights, so as to leave the white paper for them, we are frequently compelled to disregard them, and to pass over with colour, often dark, the places they are eventually to occupy. To obtain these lights afterwards, we must either use the opaque white as I have described, or have recourse to a bungling process of first wetting with water the place from which we wish to remove the colour, and then rubbing it smartly with a rag or handkerchief; if enough does not at once come off, the process must be repeated; and if we desire to have pure white, we are obliged to use the more violent means of digging for it in the paper—for it is literally that—with the point of a knife. In either case we lose purity, and obtain roughness; and have that indented in the picture which in nature is in relief.

To preserve transparency in the shadows, the white paper should always be seen shining through them: this constitutes a great charm of the art. The most effectual means of preserving transparency and purity is to paint as much as possible at once, so as always to paint on the pure white paper; and for this reason it is always better to paint in the shades and shadows first of the required strength: by this method we leave the pure paper for such light parts as are to be of a rich colour, and thus secure purity. In addition to this, by beginning with the shadows we not only secure the form of each object, but also provide, in the most ready and effectual manner, for subsequently obtaining the hue which is so important; as, when afterwards placing on the colours for the lights, we can watch the changes wrought on our feelings as their colours become contrasted in tone and depth with those of the shadows. Thus we are able to adjust them to each other, and are spared the necessity of passing one colour over another,—an evil which should as much as possible be avoided, as it is destructive of every beauty which we expect, or can derive from colour. To paint much at once, so as to avoid the necessity for change, is a great object, in painting in water colours; for if change be required, particularly if it be of any extent, it is difficult then to obtain purity and transparency, as the purity of the white paper has been irretrievably damaged.

It is impossible for a painter, however experienced, to foresee all he requires, and to anticipate every state and condition of his picture in its course towards completion, so that no change shall be required. Change somewhere is inevitable, either through failure of his first intentions, or because in course of his progress some change is suggested by which he may carry them further than he originally anticipated. When any considerable change is required, it ought to be made with a sponge; and it is always best to remove the colour entirely, so as to again obtain the white paper. If the colours have very much soiled the paper, purity may be restored by washing over the part from which the colour has been removed by opaque white so much diluted as to be semi-transparent; the surface thus prepared will receive the colours, and show their purity almost as well as the pure paper.

The value of opaque white as a pigment, in water colours, is not confined to its application to the highest lights; when it is mixed with the aerial tones of colour, and made very dilute, it gives the most beautiful effects of air to the distances. When the colours in broad washes, which have had white mixed with them, are dry, they are apt to look like coloured plaister, should the white have been too thick; and it is then necessary to wash over them with pure water until the eminences of the paper are discoverable, when the colour produced will be perfectly atmospheric.

It is hardly possible to overrate the value of opaque white in water colours when judiciously used; although it has raised the most violent and absurd hostility. It is insisted that its use is inconsistent with "legitimate" water colour painting; but those who make this objection do not indulge us by an explanation of what is "legitimate." Without intending to help them out of a difficulty, I may venture to say, that the only legitimacy Art can know in the employment of any of its materials is, that their effects shall be beautiful and durable. Their durability is, indeed, the first consideration.[*] Now, in painting in oil, both transparent and opaque pigments are admitted; and from their separate and united properties effects are obtained which could not be procured from the use of either class separately; but when the same pigments are employed, and water, not oil, is used to convey them to the paper or canvas, we are then told that because opaque colour is used, it is no longer "legitimate" water-colour painting. What else it is I am at a loss to conjecture; what more it is in power and beauty, now that its capabilities are more extended by the introduction of such an invaluable adjunct, I leave those to determine who decide, not from whimsical and groundless prejudices, but from the effects wrought on their feelings by a more effective imitation of nature, which either brings home to them

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[*] When the oxide of zinc (which is prepared by Winsor and Newton, under the name of Chinese white) was first put into my hands some years ago, I applied to one of my friends, whose name, as a chemist and philosopher, is amongst the most distinguished in our country, to analyse it for me, and to tell me if I might rely on its durability. The reply was, that if it would, in all other respects, answer the purposes I required of it, I had nothing to fear on account of its durability. Flake white, or any other white prepared from lead, is inadmissible, as they are sure to change.

new impressions and sensations, or renders those with which they were already familiar more emphatic. I should not have noticed such objections, but for their tendency to obstruct the progress of Art. Objectors of a previous day had the same opposition to offer to the removal of colour with a sponge, or a handkerchief; this too was "illegitimate;" and the only method of "pure" water colour painting then, was one which has long ago sunk into disuse.

The art of painting in water colours has been greatly assisted by improvements in the preparations of the pigments; and Messrs. Newman, Roberson, and Smith, have done much for it in this way. The greatest advantage, however, has been the introduction of moist colours, which, I believe, are a French invention, but greatly improved by Messrs. Winsor and Newton. Colours so prepared may be obtained of any depth instantly, and the slow process of preparing a palette, by grinding every colour when in cakes with water, is dispensed with. Another great advantage has been derived from the introduction of a better paper, which, from being made of purer materials than are usually employed in the manufacture of paper, and not being bleached by any chemical process, does not affect the colours. Of this I can speak most positively, from extensive experiments I have made, not only with the view of assuring myself, but for the sake of all those who practise an art which owes its present perfection to the talent of England.

In January, 1841, I placed on the pure paper washes of upwards of forty different colours, in three degrees of strength; and having divided these into two parts, I placed one part of each in a drawer away from light or air, and the others I exposed to light and very rough treatment. After the lapse of more than four years I compared the latter with those I had carefully preserved, and I found no sensible difference in the following list of colours. Among them are several which have not hitherto had the character of permanency; I however give all as I found them, after undergoing the severe test to which they had been subjected.

* Indian Yellow.
* Cadmium Yellow.
Chrome Yellow.
Lemon Yellow.
* Gamboge.
* Yellow Ochre.
* Mars Orange.
Raw Sienna.
Roman Ochre.
* Vermilion.
* Light Red.
Venetian Red.
Indian Red.
* Pink Madder.
Purple Madder.
* Brown Madder.
Indian Lake.
Indian Purple.
* Burnt Sienna.
Raw Umber.
* Burnt Umber.
* Vandyke Brown.
Cologne Earth.
* Sepia.
* Lamp Black.
Ivory Black.
* French Blue.
Cobalt.
Prussian Blue.
* Indigo.
Olive Green.
Emerald Green.
Oxide of Chromium.

I have marked with an asterisk those which I consider to be the most generally useful, as it is always desirable to use as few pigments as possible. So large a list as I have here given could never be required on any one picture. This list is equally applicable to painting in oil, with the addition of terra verte, Naples yellow, and cappah brown, instead of gamboge, indigo, and sepia.

The colours enumerated in the above list, and indeed all others, must be taken with regard to their mode of preparation. From the same bases—such as cochineal and madder root—many different pigments are prepared by varying the quality or quantity of the salts, through the agency of which the colouring matter is formed or extracted, or by uniting this matter with different substances. Changes and new combinations are forced on the colour-manufacturer, by scientific discovery, or competition, to produce colours at the lowest cost. As few manufacturers produce the same pigments by precisely the same methods, it thus happens that the substances produced, although apparently identical, vary so much as to require, on the part of the artist's colourman, an intimate knowledge of their composition, in order that he may vary his preparation of them, so as to secure to the painter a durable as well as a beautiful pigment.

The artist's colourman should have a chemical knowledge of the different substances which enter into the pigments he prepares, as it is on his judgment, in the first instance, that the painter relies for their durability.

THE END.

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