DRAWING FOR CHILDREN AND OTHERS

TREES AND A CHERRY TREE

This is a reproduction of a bit of colour 'fun' that I had one late afternoon in February (pictured here in black and white and on the cover in colour). Why I am talking about colour in a book on drawing is explained on pages 13-22.

DRAWING

FOR CHILDREN AND OTHERS

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PREFACE . . . FOR THE 'OTHERS'

WHEN first the idea of writing this short book came to me, I meant it to be a book for children only; but when I began to work seriously on it, I also began to realize several things to which I had not paid sufficient attention before I began. Quite true that the great text of my sermon was from the beginning clear and evident to me: Drawing is a beautiful and intensely interesting thing, and so is the learning of it. It is not class-room drudgery—as, so often, it is made to be; it is nothing else than knowing how to see the beauties of construction and of effect in the natural universe. In a word: Learning to draw is learning to see.

Before I began to write I thought that it would be quite easy to explain this little by little to a juvenile audience. I still think that it is. But I now realize—and I believe that I am right in this—that this explanation must indeed be done 'little by little', must be backed up by the repetition of innumerable examples; examples that may be looked at with both eyes, felt, perhaps, with all ten fingers. The abstractions of the child are many, but they are not those of the philosopher and aesthete. The child's abstractions are his own affair; the realities of

our grown-up life, which we lose no occasion of forcing upon him, will soon make an end of them, just as our grown-up drawing will make an end of his primitive art, with which (in spite of certain modern movements which it is not the place to examine here) our grown-up art has nothing, or so very very little, to do. His own abstractions he invents for himself; but when we want him to learn to understand ours, our grown-up abstractions, the difficulty begins.

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The very existence of this book naturally raises a question which would not have been asked fifty or sixty years ago in Europe,* when naive suggestiveness of untrammelled childlike invention had not yet been lauded, or at most had only been praised as a past thing executed by some primitive of Florence or Sienna. The child left to himself never draws from Nature, never studies in the way I suggest in these pages; he draws 'from his imagination'. It is undeniable that such drawings have a very definite aesthetic value. They contain, they depend on, much which lies at the base of the arts of primitive peoples. To this I have drawn attention in a chapter on Primitive Art written for Captain Rattray's book on *The Religion of Ashanti* (published by the Clarendon Press at the expense of the British Government). I have also examined primitive art in *The Art and Craft of Drawing*.† It is thus superfluous

*I cannot here develop my reasons for adding the reservation of 'Europe'. I must, however, beg my reader to note that I have made it.

†Clarendon Press, 1927.

to do more than mention it here. The motive forces of primitive arts are practically in complete opposition to the programme set out in the following pages. Why have I not encouraged the child to continue, to perfect the naively imaginative art which is natural to him? Why have I directed him into completely different paths? Not, I beg you to believe, from want of meditation upon the subject.

The child's mind is moulded not only by hereditary tendencies, but by the environment in which he lives his daily life. He has only one mind, not many! When, at the age of six, he does not deal consistently with logical thought; when imagination and observed fact still commingle casually in his mental act, and he cheerfully assures you that he has just met a tiger in the back garden—one kind of artistic impulse, the 'primitive', is natural to him—his work on such lines will be to a certain extent 'good' and interesting. But when you have slowly trained him to more or less exact co-ordination between observation and statement, you have at every step rendered *naïveté* and primitivism more alien to his mind. Imaginative primitive art becomes less and less the natural expression of his mind. In these pages I have endeavoured to trace the way by which he may arrive at being more or less adept in the art which is an expression of the general mind-form inevitably imposed upon him by his environment. Yet I too lean towards regret that the naïve imaginings of his early years can but be the ephemeral flowering of an age so quickly past.

Preface

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Drawing is seeing. It may be no more difficult to prove (?) the truth (?) of this aphorism than it is to prove the truth (again imagine the question marks!) of any other. But how are we to get our young gentleman or young lady of eight or ten to follow our learned phrases? I fear the view out of the window, the casual dog, the passing motor-car will prove far more interesting.

Still I am not without hope; but success must be pushed one degree farther off I must begin by converting to the doctrine a 'grown-up', who in turn shall administer the gospel by very small doses at a time—small doses of abstraction mixed with large doses of solid, tangible fact; of tree trunks which ARE round; of visible fact which CAN BE looked at with both eyes; of things which DO get smaller as they move off; of near trees which do seem darker in colour than more distant ones; of street foot-ways that do seem to meet in the distance; of horizontal building tops that do seem to slope downwards as they recede. And it is not once but many, many times that the child's naturally wandering attention must be called to these observations. Evidently such repetitions are not possible in book form. Did one even try to make them, no child would ever wade through the pages. I must fall back on the help of the 'grown-up' who in common with me desires (why do we?) to replace the inherent art of childhood by that complex thing of profound knowledge, of abstract aesthetic reasoning, of multiple manifestation, that art has become during the ages of

man's habitation of the globe.

So I have restrained my first ambition to the minor one of—in the main—suggesting to the 'grown-up' what he or she shall say to the child, shall say many times to the child, shall say as often as possible to the child, and shall just as many times point out to the child about Nature herself—that is if so be that the 'grown-up' find any health in my argument.

At the same time I have employed the simplest language that I have found myself able to use. I have paid no attention at all to any kind of literary elegance. I have committed all possible crimes against style; have I not, time after time, finished a sentence with a preposition? I have done this in hopes of some children being willing to read part, at least, of the text, and also with the intention of furnishing as many phrases as possible ready-made to the intermediate grown-up I trust I shall not be pilloried for my crimes of *lèse-anglais*, nor for my repeated use of the first personal pronoun which always renders an explanation more vivid and easier for the child to seize. One tells him in a direct way what one wishes him to do.

I am conscious of my repetitions. They are made intentionally; a thing once said is rarely assimilated. It is by no means useless to repeat several times, varying slightly each time, both the language and the method of presenting an idea.

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When I had written the greater part of these pages I handed them over to a young lady to read. 'But', said

she, 'this is just what I have always been looking for! I have never been able to find any one who can explain to me what is the difference between a good picture and a bad one!' Of course! the thing had not occurred to me. When one describes the kind, the nature of the observation that, either consciously or sub-consciously, an artist of value makes with a view to enclosing its results in his picture, one has automatically defined the nature of the results, one has automatically defined a whole category of 'good' qualities of painting, in any case of good painting as it is generally understood and practised in contemporary Europe. I changed my title. I introduced explanations into the text; I pointed out in so many words that here were means of discriminating between good and bad pictures, at least in so far as drawing went. And drawing is the base of painting. Painting without shape is not painting. The loosest brush-work of Monet aims at suggesting *form,* though under the robe of colour, though behind the veiling of effect. Again, drawing is seeing; it is not the way in which the thing is done, but the way in which it is thought. Whether my intention be to represent the shape of an object by means of a clear-cut pencil outline, or to represent it dimly shrouded in luminous and tinted mist, I must note the same facts concerning its solidity, its 'construction', its 'volumes', its 'planes', the 'suppleness' or the 'stability' of its kind; I must submit all the observed facts to the perspective conventions on which we are agreed in modern Europe, to the codified conventions and to the admitted derogations from them. The observations which I make from Nature

are in all their principal parts the same, whether I have in view one or other of those two extreme techniques. At the last moment I take up the pencil or I take up the brush, I either use my observations in a precise and clearly defined way, or mingled with 'effect', in a less precise, in a more suggestive way, allowing to charm of colour or to subtlety of light and shade a greater part in the work. Meditate upon this seeming paradox: The drawing is finished before ever the drawing is begun, or if it is not, it ought to be.

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But all this is much too difficult for children. Undoubtedly. Art is a very difficult subject, and demands more years of study than any other. Let us go back to the accepted method for at least a few years until the child is old enough to understand better. Let us give him 'copies' to copy. Let us give him spheres to draw. Let us inculcate in him habits of tidiness by obliging him to rub out lines until they are of equal blackness all along, and quite symmetrical on either side of the 'ornamental' (alas!) design. This will teach him perseverance and accuracy. It is an excellent training for him. One moment, please: what are we talking about? moral training with a view to turning out good ratepayers by the dozen, each as like to the other as we can; nine to four at the office, and so on? Very sorry, but that is not precisely the subject taught here. You must have mistaken the address. We teach art here—or we try to do so. Whatever art may have been in hierarchic and ancient Egypt, in less ancient China—in both countries there was a firmly established aesthetic tradition which

stretched over the centuries—two essentials of modern European art are individuality and innovation. True again, this innovation—modern Europe has decided it—must be based on natural observation. But that is precisely for what I am striving. A great proportion of modern art is emotional, why kill emotion in a dry-as-dust class-room? Probably on account of the ingrained British belief that emotion must neither be encouraged nor shown; only a little cheap sentimentalism is to be allowed. How intensely uninteresting and monotonous British life is to those not perennially soaked in its apathy! Can we not react against the materialism of the somnolent after-dinner arm-chair, the pipe which follows the plentiful plate of roast beef and potatoes? Ah! but the football and the cricket! Be not deceived; the materialism of twenty demands movement, the same materialism at forty demands its pipe and its very low and very easy chair. Art is a keen and nervous emotion which fixes itself upon beauty; it is not somnolent, it is not apathetic, it is not tidy, it has no office hours. It is not concrete, though based on concrete phenomena. If you would teach art, encourage emotion caused by beauty, encourage enthusiasm; do not suppress both as being in 'bad taste'.

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That ugly class-room! 'But there is beauty everywhere', some one cries. That may be so. However, be careful of the maxim. There may be degrees of beauty, degrees in the artistic values of different forms of beauty. Let us begin by encouraging children to enjoy the more obvious kinds, and leave to a later perception

the estimate of those types of beauty that may be found in the sewer, to which Anatole France gently relegated Zola after the loss of his spectacles. No, give your child beautiful things to study and to draw from the start; for drawing is naught but the appreciation of beauty. What can one do to uproot the heinous fallacy that drawing is the copying of objects? Be careful, very careful, lest in the beginning you heap arid mountains of drudgery upon the nascent love of the beautiful that your child may show, upon a natural want which he may feel of creating a form of beauty of his own; lest you stifle, for years irreparably, a first fine delicate desire. The flower in its new blossoming is but a fragile thing. For seven years did my 'art masters' separate me from my future end in life. Thrice cursed be their names.

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But surely one must begin at the beginning and work one's way slowly upwards! Did it ever occur to you that the beginning and the end of art, both, are beauty? That art and beauty are inseparable? That—let us say it at once—they are identical? How can we begin by the grammar of the subject, by that horrible dry invention of desiccated professors, of would-be creators who cannot create, of Rabelais's *'cervaux à bourlet, grabeleurs de corrections'*, to whom he cries to get out of his sunlight, out from between him and the enduring source of life and beauty? How many of you would be condemned to eternal silence had you been forced to learn the grammar of your native tongue before you were allowed to speak it? By high fortune, still the nursemaid scoffs at the grammarian!

Preface

I, too, submitted to immobile years in the same unchanging class—the 'lower third'(!)—of Latin grammar; till one fine day (how came it to be permitted?) Horace thrust in:

Vides ut alta stet five candidum Soracte.*

Long after, in subtle line and faintest violet tints, I drew the fair shape of that same Soracte; and, to-day, I am not wholly Latinless.

To the dust-heap with your grammars, with your plaster casts, with your schoolmaster's copies, with your tidy lines and your India-rubber! Rubbing out never yet made a Michelangelo who cut, unhesitatingly, Titans from the marble block. Learn from the first to see, to wonder at the rhythmic beauty of things, rise up and haste towards it, yield to its magnetism; what matter if you stumble on the way? Pick yourself up, stretch out your hands anew towards the ever unattainable—perfection of Beauty.

*See how supreme Soracte's high-snowed whiteness stands!

And pencil could not emulate
The beauty in this, how free, how fine
To fear almost! of the limit-line.

Robert Browning, *James Lee's Wife*

(VIII. Beside the Drawing Board).

Look in the Glossary, p. 173, for any name which you do not know, or for any word of which you do not know the meaning; it will very likely be there.

I

WHAT DRAWING IS

LEARNING to draw is learning to see. Many people think that drawing is a lot of mysterious ways of using a pencil, or a pen, or a piece of chalk, or a piece of charcoal so as to make a picture on a sheet of paper, a picture of things, a picture which shall be a nice tidy portrait of each one of them so that every one can see what it is meant to be. Now I don't mean to deny that there is not a wonderful lot of clever ways of using a pen in this way or in that, in order that the marks that we make on the paper may look 'like' leaves, look 'like' water, look 'like' a tea-pot, a cup and saucer, a sugar-basin. Unfortunately this is so. I say 'unfortunately', because the drawings done in this way are not generally worth very much, and have very little to do with art. If you know how to see, that is, if you know how to distinguish between the artistically important facts and those which are only of a less importance, you have only to scribble these facts down anyhow on a piece of paper and you will be surprised to find how 'like' your drawing is to what you have drawn it from, especially if you look at your drawing from a little way off. This is really the belief

of a school of painters called Impressionists, because they painted the impressions they received from Nature, who worked much in this way about fifty years ago in France, and have been very much imitated since. If you work in that way you may call yourself an Impressionist too. But perhaps you don't believe what I have just said about scribbling shadows and things in anyhow. If so, the best thing I can do is to leave off writing and make just such a scribble, or just such a drawing, whichever it pleases you to call it.

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Now don't you think you can scribble just about as badly as that (Figure 1)? I haven't taken any kind of trouble with my pen; I have just used it anyhow; and although the result is not very good and very clever and all the rest of it, still I think you can see what the things are meant for. That's just the funny part of it: I scribble anyhow on a piece of paper and somehow or another my scribbles look like a tea-pot and a tea-cup and other things. Let us try to find out why.

The first thing I want to tell you is that when I left off writing just now I didn't begin to draw at once out of my head. I went and got a tea-pot, and a tea-cup, and all the rest, and set them out on the table in front of me. I have been drawing and painting and cutting stone into statues for the last thirty years; all the same I don't start to make a scribble like this one without having the things themselves, in front of me, that is, if I want the scribble to be at all a good scribble. I should advise you too only to scribble in front of the things

themselves. Just now I told you that learning to draw was learning to see; if you've got nothing to look at you can't learn to see it! Perhaps the best thing to do will be for me to tell you just how I 'saw' this group of things arranged so as to make what we artists call a 'Still Life'.

FIGURE 1. *This is a very rough scribble from tea-things and a decanter. It is meant to show that it doesn't matter how you scribble the lines, if only you choose the right things to scribble down. Attention has been paid to the* IMPORTANCE *of certain things, and to the 'pattern'—which is really the same thing—but no attention has been paid at all to 'the way in which it has been done'.*

First of all I noticed that the tea-pot was fat and round, and then I remembered that the window from which the light was coming was on my left hand, so all the shadows in the Still Life were on the right-hand side of the things and sloped a little away from me.

When an object is solid, and not transparent, it stops some of the light that falls on it from going any farther, so one side of the object is darker than the other; also a shadow falls on the table or the ground on the side away from the light. When we look at things, the best way we have of understanding that they are solid, that we can take hold of them if they are small enough, or that we can walk round them if they are bigger, is by noticing that one side is light and the other darker. If we want to make a drawing look like them, one of the best things we can do is to copy these shadows by making some parts of our paper darker than others, just in the places where the dark shadows come on the objects themselves. So when I noticed that the tea-pot was shaped like a ball, I at once noticed also that I saw its round shape mostly because it was darker just to the left of the bottom of the spout and also just over the spout. Moreover the feet of the tea-pot threw shadows on the table, and all the table under and to the right of the tea-pot was in shadow and so darker than the rest. I scribbled in these patches of shade at once, pretty well in their right places, but, as you can see, without taking much care about it. Then I did the same kind of thing when I came to the cup and saucer and the sugar-basin and the plate. All these things showed up against a dark background, against which the far edge of the table appeared light. When I looked at the glass decanter I saw that the edge of the table, which I saw *through* the glass, looked much higher up than the rest, and seemed to be curved. This is due to what scientific people call 'refraction'. You will notice that in my scribble I put

these facts down, I mustn't say carefully, because my drawing is a very untidy one; anyway, I put them down. If I didn't put them down carefully I did one thing carefully: *I looked at the tea-pot and the other things very carefully,* and that is just what people don't do nearly enough when they are drawing. People look much too much at the drawing, and not nearly enough at the model. if they would do just the opposite their work would be very much better. It isn't what you do on the paper that matters, it's what you think before you do it that is of so much importance. So long as you choose the right thing to put down on the paper it hardly matters a bit how you put it down; the great difficulty is to choose the right thing; that's where all the trouble comes in; that's what takes such a very long time to learn. It's a very funny thing, but just what we are inclined to think the most important thing is nearly always the least important. You would think that the edges of a house are the most important to draw, and you want to begin at once by drawing straight lines along the roof and down the corners of the walls. But look at Figure 2. I think you will see that it is meant to be a house and a fence and so on. If you look carefully at it you will see that I have drawn nothing but the shadows. The wooden railings aren't drawn at all. You guess that they are there on account of the shadows that they throw on the ground. What is more, you see the shape of the ground; you see that there is a ditch at the left of the picture; it is only the shape of the shadow that makes you think there is a ditch just behind the fence. Any reasonable person would have thought that

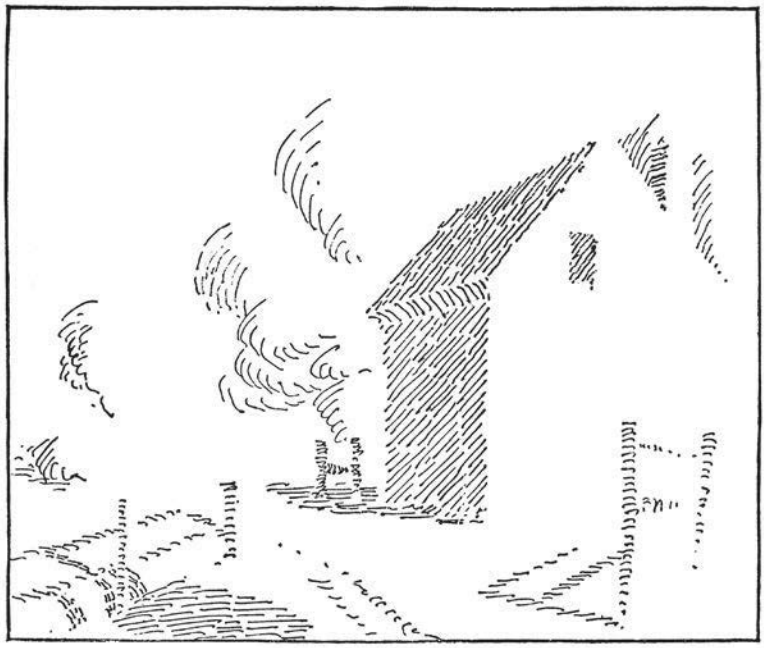

FIGURE 2 *shows how very often we need only put down the* SHAPES OF *the shadows in order to make people think that the things have really been drawn. When shadows are clearly marked you should always take a great deal of trouble over drawing them. You will generally find that the drawing looks quite finished enough when you have done drawing the shadows. You notice how there are* NO OUTLINES AT ALL *in this diagram; and that none of the objects have been drawn as one would naturally think that they ought to be. The shapes of the shadows are specially useful in modelling the front (ground part) of the picture.*

if we want to draw a fence and a ditch we must draw a fence and a ditch, and that it would not be any use at all only to draw the shadow of a fence. But you see from this drawing that there are a lot of things in art which don't happen at all as reasonable people would expect them to happen; and that here the shadow of a fence is

quite enough to *suggest* the existence of both a fence and a ditch. And there's the big word let loose! *Suggestion* is at the bottom of it all! If I do draw a tea-pot on a piece of paper, at the best of times my drawing is not a real tea-pot; I can only *suggest* a teapot to you. What we have to do is to look at the model, at the tea-pot, at the fence, and choose what will best suggest their existences. There are lots of different ways of suggesting a tea-pot. Many teachers will tell you to draw a nice tidy line all round it, which will give you a great deal of trouble, and will take a tremendous lot of rubbing out and putting in again before you get it not too crooked; and I am afraid that you will get very tired of that drawing and others like it before you get very far on towards making a really good drawing. I don't want you to get tired. Art is a most interesting subject; we ought to take a keen delight in exercising it, and we can take this delight if we only set about doing it in the right and interesting way. I don't mean to say that it does not want a great deal of work to turn us into capable draughtsmen—it does; it takes years and years; still this work can be most interesting and attractive. Why should it be turned into an annoying drudgery of india-rubber and tidy black lines, that refuse to get tidy however hard we work at them? And then one thing is sure to happen if you use india-rubber and try to make tidy lines: before long you will be looking at your drawing a great deal more than you look at the model. Just try once if this isn't true. A little way back I have said that drawing is learning how to see things; while you are looking at your drawing you can't very well be learning how to

see, how to look at the model! No, choose nice interesting things to draw, and look at them, study them very carefully, notice how they are made, or how they have grown. It is wonderful how interesting things get as soon as we begin to pay attention to them. Until one begins one would never think how interesting it is to find out what a pretty pattern there is inside that little white flower that we didn't even notice before: or how amusing it is to see how the cabinet-maker arranged the joints of that chair or table, or how the shoulder-blades of the cat stick up in the air when she plants her fore-paws on the ground in a certain way while she is squatting down. What comes of all that kind of noticing is the sort of thing we must treasure up if we mean to draw; we should even go on with our curiosity and understand all about the arrangement of the pistil, the stamens, the petals of the flower, about the way in which the cat's shoulder-blades are joined to the bones of her front legs, and even the more we know about cabinet-making the better we shall draw a chair or a table. Learning all about the shapes of things is part of learning how to see them, and learning how to see them is learning how to draw them. Your drawing doesn't matter a little bit, *so don't be anxious about it, don't rub out all the lines that aren't tidy.* Just make up your mind what you mean to put down on the paper, and then put it down as well as you can straight off. Perhaps it won't be very well done to begin with; that doesn't matter; *when you have done some hundreds of drawings you will find that they get better and better done as you go on.* So don't use expensive drawing-paper; any thin

wrapping-paper will do; and instead of trying hard to correct a wrong drawing, make another one all over again. Learning to correct bad drawings (or rather learning to tidy them up) is not learning to draw. *Learning to draw is learning to make a good drawing straight off.* Learning to draw is learning to see, learning to correct is not learning to see. And what is worse, we don't really learn to correct; with all our rubbings out, we only learn to tidy up, which is not at all the same thing. A drawing is not necessarily good because it is untidy, but a drawing made by a beginner will probably be bad if it is tidy. There is only one real way to learn to draw: it is to look at the model, to examine it, to try to understand it, to try to decide as to what are the most important facts about the lights and shadows on it. When we have learnt to do this properly we have learnt how to draw.

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But let us return to my scribble that I made from the tea-things. I said something about the way in which the edge of the table appeared higher up and curved when seen through the glass of the decanter. If we want our drawing of a decanter to 'look like glass' we must carefully remark all sorts of facts of this kind, all sorts of reflections of shade and light which are often twisted out of the shape that they would naturally have if they were just ordinary reflections in a looking-glass. It is just these changes and twistings which will suggest in the drawing the shape of the decanter or the vase. It's not a bit of good your trying to imagine how these twistings will go and trying to draw them out of your head; you

must look carefully at the vase, and put down what you see, not what you think you ought to see. What is the good of learning to draw if you know everything about that sort of thing to begin with? If you do know all about it, well, you know how to draw. As for me, I am always surprised to find that such and such a reflection 'goes like that'; I should never have thought so. Nature always surprises us right to the end of a long life of study.

The shadow side of a round object is, of course, darker than the light side; but most things reflect light; indeed, it is by the light which they reflect that we see them. The table-cloth underneath and all round the tea-pot is white, so it reflects some light back into the shadow on the right-hand side of the tea-pot. You will see that I have noted this in my scribble by leaving the lower right-hand border of the tea-pot lighter than the rest of the shaded part. You should always look for these reflected lights; they nearly always exist, and they help to suggest that the round shape goes on going round into the paper, that the object is really round. Although we are not conscious of it, we are really used to seeing this kind of reflection in the shadow every time we look at things; so when we look at a drawing in which the reflection is noted, we feel comfortable about the business—we feel that everything is all right, that the tea-pot really is round. Ordinary people who can't draw don't notice that they see these reflections. Artists do notice that they see them. When I say we must learn to see, I mean that we must learn to notice all the details of what we see, learn to notice both that we *do* see and *what* we see. Then we shall be able to put down on the

paper what we and everyone else really do see, though it isn't by any means everyone who understands that he does see in that way.

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I have hardly used any outlines in my scribble. You can see in Figure 2 that outlines are not needful at all. Those I have used in Figure 1 are hardly worthy to be called outlines, they are so badly done. I might have done without them altogether as in Figure 2. In the cup in the front of the picture you will see that I have drawn no outline along its left side, because I did not feel that it was *important* enough to be put in. Why put in an outline between the part of the saucer that I have left white, and the part of the cup that is white too? We are, this time, making notes—very roughly scribbled notes, very carelessly scribbled notes—of what strikes us first on looking at the tea-things. Now it is not the boundary between two white parts of our subject that strikes us as being very important; indeed we have to look very hard at our Still Life before we can see just where the boundary comes. If we were doing a very highly finished drawing of this Still Life we might have to notice exactly where the teacup ends and the saucer begins; but don't let us try to do a finished drawing yet, because a finished drawing is not a tidied up drawing, but a drawing which contains thousands and thousands of facts that we have noticed on the model, facts of appearance which we have put down carefully, one after the other, in the right order of *importance.* Before we can do this with any hope of success we must have already made hundreds and hundreds of drawings, or

it would be much better to say, we must have studied carefully and thoughtfully hundreds and hundreds of subjects hundreds and hundreds of times, for it is not so much the drawings which count as the attentive looking at Nature.

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What do I mean by 'importance'? You have all of you seen quite finished pictures containing a great lot of detail; you also know that quite a few lines, scribbles, or dots made with a pen or a pencil like those in Figure 3 suggest quite sufficiently the landscape reproduced in Figure 4. According to whether you make a drawing with lines, or with shading, or with both, the *important* facts that you notice first, and use first, will not be quite the same. Just now, when scribbling the tea-cup, I did not use a profile—between two white parts—which I should have used, probably, if I had been making a drawing in line. Although the important facts will not be *quite* the same always, many of them are. I cannot give you any rule for distinguishing in each case between the importance of one fact and the importance of another. Being able to judge this difference is knowing how to draw. We are learning how to judge this difference each time we study the model, each time we try to understand what we see, and then transfer what we see to the paper intelligently. You will understand better what I mean by 'importance' when you have finished reading this book. The greater part of it will really be only pointing out the most important facts in each example which I give you.

Enjoyment

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It always ought to be great fun to make a sketch or to paint a picture. You should always enjoy yourself while you are doing it. If you get bored over such work—or why shouldn't we call it play?—you may be sure that what you do won't be any good. I had great fun for half an hour painting the sketch which has been reproduced in black and white as the frontispiece to this book, and in colour on the cover. That's mainly why I asked to have it put in. I had been painting an almond tree in blossom all the afternoon, and wasn't particularly pleased with the result, so when the sun had got a little too far down in the sky, and the shadows weren't any longer in the right places, I packed up my easel and went a little farther along the path. Then I passed through a kind of court-yard in front of a group of houses built in stone and dating from about three hundred years ago. Opposite them is a great reservoir for washing clothes in. Through it runs ceaselessly the perfectly transparent water of a spring. But I didn't stop there. I went on into the open fields beyond, and as soon as I got past the houses and their gardens I turned round to look behind me. The sun was just going to drop behind the hill on my left, and everything was already turning golden in the evening light. All of a sudden I saw what I really wanted to paint! The bare February branches of a kind of willow tree, lit as they were by the evening sun, struck a vivid orange across the blue of the early spring Provençal sky. The orange and the blue! and then there was the yellow-green of the grass in the

FIGURE 3 *is meant to show with how few lines, if one chooses them rightly, quite a complicated subject can be represented. The drawing was begun by putting in the trunk of the middle tree, because the real subject of the picture is the three tree trunks, and that one is the most important because the path 'takes us' to it. The second thing put in was the right-hand trunk, which at once made a simple but incomplete balance. Then came the third trunk in order to get in the main subject: the three trunks. Then the horizontal lines of the bridge and the two dark accents under it were drawn; because they make an accent to which the eye 'goes' along the path. Then the lines representing the surface of the path; then the wriggly line along its side; then the lines which indicate the masses of plants and rushes on each side of the path. These help us to feel that we are 'going over them' and 'into' the picture. The marks at the top suggest the underside of the leaves, and so 'shut down' the picture, and make us feel that we are looking* UNDER *the trees. Each thing noted is noted for a reason; it helps to explain the state of things.*

FIGURE 4 *is a photograph of the subject from which the sketch was really done. In another drawing one might note the patch of light in front of the bridge, and that the foreground is in shadow, and, in short, pay less attention to line and more to light and shade. That is in part the artist's business and in part depends on the subject chosen. But an artist who wishes to work in line should not choose light-and-shade subjects. And vice versa. (Although the camera was placed where I sat, the opposite sketch looks different from this picture, because the lens took in a wider angle than I had dealt with.)*

foreground. I got my easel up as quickly as I could and meant having a real bit of colour fun to make up for my rather unsatisfactory painting afternoon. So I really didn't care a bit what I did, so long as I did something with blue and orange and yellow-green in it. At any rate that was my first idea. But of course, in order to make the colours 'tell', I had to have some dark accents, and some blue and purple shadow tones. In this little book I haven't been able to tell you anything about this making colours 'tell', or making them 'luminous' or full of light. I said quite a lot about that in *The Way to Sketch,* so it is really not worth while repeating it here. But I didn't want to write this book without saying anything at all about how colour and drawing 'join up' and 'help' one another. That is another reason why I asked to be allowed to have a colour illustration. It is all very well to put down the right colours on the paper or canvas; that alone would be a great point gained; but if as well you arrange them as a colour pattern with its light and dark accents you will be surprised to find how much they are improved. Then, if the colours themselves are gay, you ought to arrange them in a gay kind of way, in order to keep all your picture in the same kind of feeling. As a matter of fact you are pretty certain to do that, because if you are dealing with, copying, or inventing gay colour you will be in a gay frame of mind; and as you are alternately inventing the tint and where to put it, you are certain to be in the same state of mind while you are inventing both. Of course if, on the contrary, you happen to be sad—well, you'll invent sad colour and sad placing of it. Sad colour may be very nice too,

because sad colour need not be 'bored' colour. But for the moment I don't want to talk about either of them, because I am looking at the sketch I made a year ago now, and remembering how glad the colour was—it is nearly as glad this evening at just the same time and on about the same day of the month; the evening sun is coming in at the open window and casting greenish shadows on the paper, which is all pale gold on the roller of the typewriter, shadows which play about among the violet letters that I keep on adding one after another, line after line.

Well, I started on my sketch, I remember, and thought that as I meant having some fun I might just as well put the sky in a much deeper blue than it really was! Why shouldn't I, if I felt like doing it? Of course, if I made a mess of it, that was my look-out. But I thought that, within reason, the stronger and bluer and (a little) greener I made my sky the more brilliant the orange trunk and branches would become, and they were really what I set out to paint. You should always—I have said so before—be quite clear about *why* you are drawing or painting anything, and all the time you are at work never forget what that 'why' is. Keep on coming back to it. Let everything call attention to it. Let everything else only be there in order to make that 'why' more of a 'why' than ever. My 'why' was making colour dance, so the first thing I did was to put it on the paper in separate brush-marks. If 1 had painted the sky all over with a tidy uniform tint, like painting a door, it wouldn't have been half so dancy. And then I wasn't going to be serious and hard-working and tidy, and all sorts of proper

things like that; I was just going to have some colour fun, and as soon as I got tired of putting blue on the sky—well, I'd leave off and put some orange on the tree trunk, or some yellow-green on the grass, or feel quite determined about things by placing a nice dark purple-brown shadow accent somewhere or another where I felt at the moment that the dancing rhythm wanted me to—to—to put my foot down hard! You wouldn't believe what fun it is taking colours off a palette and putting them on paper or canvas in that way. Of course the sky, even here in the south of France, ought not to be so dark a blue low down near the horizon; but I wasn't trying to copy what I saw, I was being very naughty and doing just what I liked. And what I liked, my 'why' for the moment, was nice blue blue and nice orange orange, and as long as they made a pretty dancing pattern—well, I cared for nobody, no, not I, and very likely nobody cared for me, although I was a painter and didn't have a mill on the river Dee! So I thought the pattern wanted some cream-white light on the stone wall in about the middle of the picture. I put it in. Then that made me think that I wanted to put a little more cream-white on the distant house (it was a house, though you might not guess it from the picture), so I put that in. *I* didn't mind! But if you think I was going to take the trouble to make it quite clear that it was a house by making an outline all round it and carefully painting my cream-white colour up to that outline, you're very much mistaken. What did it matter to me whether you understood that it was a house or not? I didn't care about what you thought, I was enjoying myself; so when, after two or

three brush-strokes of cream-white, I got tired of that and wanted to do something else, I *did* do something else. So long as my two patches of white attracted attention to the middle of my pattern and balanced up its rhythm, that was all *I* wanted, so I let it go at that. You can take them for copies of *The Times* newspaper or two polar bears out for a walk. *I* don't mind. *I* was only having some fun with colour. Only we can't even have fun *really* without having fun *properly.* When you play blind-man's-buff you've got to pay some attention to the rules of the game, or else you'll all quarrel and won't have a good time at all. So it's no good putting any old colour on the paper in any old way: you'll only make a mess and get tired of it very soon. When you put your colour on you must put it on according to the rules of the game—of the game of rhythm and balance. Oh, it doesn't really matter a bit if you balance with a polar bear or *The Times,* but *you must balance* or you won't have any real fun. You see in this picture, as soon as I got my two bits of white down I was obliged to put in that bit of buff-coloured wall over on the left to make a sort of die-away balance for them. Cover it up with your finger and see how uncomfortable the want of it makes you feel. And being uncomfortable isn't having fun.

I got Monsieur Arlaud, who was here a few days ago, to take a photograph of the place (Figure 5), in order to show you a little what it really looked like; but I see that he has taken it just a bit too much to the right, so you don't see that light buff piece of wall (which is in a straight line with the white stone wall in the middle of the picture), you only see the dark part of the wall

Figure 5

in shadow, the part I have painted bright ultramarine blue (for fun!) in the picture. Then the photograph was taken just a few minutes later than the moment at which I painted the foreground, because the two shadows of the trees outside the picture are now lying over it—or perhaps I left them out because I wanted to keep all the foreground as far as possible bright yellow-green: I forget. Don't forget (I didn't) that I was doing just what I liked. In the pattern that Monsieur Arlaud's picture makes, the cherry tree in the foreground is the most important thing—the thing we look at. He was obliged to make it so. The camera won't leave things out (sometimes, if you do photography yourself, you may have found that it leaves everything out altogether, but that is not what I mean!); but I left out just what I wished as I was only amusing myself, so amongst

other things I left out most of the cherry tree—as well as leaving out altogether the tree between it and the orange trunk. Monsieur Arlaud has felt obliged to take his picture a little more to the right than I did, because the camera made the cherry tree the most important thing in the picture and he felt that it wouldn't do to have the most important thing too far over to the right. What catches the eye in my little joke is the patch of white wall, so *I* let the cherry tree go in order not to have two points of interest in the picture.

You see a sketch is just a happy rhythmic balance, that and nothing more. A photograph is a complete picture, or I would rather say a complete copy of Nature; so although both, to be at all satisfactory, must obey the rules of the game of balance, still they need not be balanced in exactly the same way. If I had finished my picture I might have been obliged to come to much the same kind of balance as that of Monsieur Arlaud's picture, but as I was leaving out whatever I liked, and even moving things about as I liked, I was able to use quite a different balance from his. In a sketch you put in just what is wanted to make it balance. Why should you be bothered to put in more? for all sketching is fun. Just go over my sketch and cover up with your finger the dark or light patches on it, one after another. I think you will in each case want each patch back again, just as I wanted to put it there. That's the real way to make a sketch, putting things on the paper because you want them to make a balance. The wrong way to go about the work is to put in all the windows of a house because they are there; and when you have begun to draw a

window, to go on drawing it until it is quite done, just as if it were a sum in arithmetic or a Latin exercise. No, you should dance about all over the place just where you want to, and then your sketch will probably be as lively and interesting as you felt the game to be when you were playing it.

You may say that I began by saying that my 'why' was the orange branches and the blue sky, and that afterwards I said that the 'point of interest' was the white wall. This is not really a contradiction. The orange branches and the blue sky were a 'colour idea', but to 'publish' that idea satisfactorily I had to fit it out with a pattern, and the pattern I chose was the one in which the interest is fixed on the white patch. But I didn't forget my first idea for a single instant. All the tints of my pattern are decided by my blue-and-orange colour idea. It is because of that idea that my dark accents are just such a dark purple, that my blue shadows are just such a vivid blue. All that makes up a colour rhythm in which the form rhythm is carried out. The orange branches and the blue sky decided once for all the 'key of colour' in which I was going to paint my pattern. Those were the rules which I kept to while playing my little game, having my little joke all to myself. So you see a little bit how colour rhythm and pattern rhythm, about which I have bothered you so much in this book, may be made to join up and work together.