The BUILDING of a PICTURE

W. L. JUDSON

bought second hand
K.D. Jones

Frank C. Crowe

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The Building of a Picture

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Apology

"Of the making of books there is no end", and yet there seemed to be need of a companionable little book about the making of pictures.

The cry for knowledge how to judge pictures, how to enjoy them, how to make them is a ceaseless hum in these strenuous days of high endeavor and great ideals.

The words set down here in short sentences are the very phrases used again and again in the actual practice of teaching; the very things the practical student and amateur wants to know.

The principles upon which pictures are made are the principles by which they must be judged, so those who love art and those who practice it may equally find pleasure and profit in knowing how some successful artists have worked.

Keep the book handy for reference and read a little now and then.

THE AUTHOR

The Building of a Picture

THE VITAL QUALITIES

WHAT is it all about—this confounding and ceaseless discussion of art which leads to nowhere? There is Madame Jones who finds only food for melancholy in the pictures which fill the soul of Professor Brown with ineffable peace. Is there anything wrong with her intellectual discernment?

Art criticism

And there is Doctor Smith (the LL. D.), an acknowledged authority on art. Why does he turn up his metaphorical nose in disdain at the things which feed the higher life of Madame Jones? Is the taste for art like that for tobacco—a thing to be acquired by practice only? Are there no foundation principles, no common ground on which all the elect may stand for a common enjoyment? Need they vex their righteous souls over the weaknesses of their neighbors for this, that, or the other special brand or flavor?

Bless you, there is no real quarrel. These people love one another. The Browns, Smiths and Joneses are all highly gifted and cultured people, especially in literature and art. These crisp and pungent opinions of theirs are the visible evidences of the fact.

A tribute to the critics

If you will always remember, my children, that art criticism should properly be accepted as a just tribute to the great learning of the critic it will add much to your peace of mind.

Because Professor Brown is a successful academician, Madame Jones an impressionist of the broad and vivid branch of that broad and vivid school and Doctor Smith has studied the old masters in Madrid and Florence, is it not necessary that each should shout something or other to draw attention to the fact?

Secretly they envy and admire each other for their attainments and opinions.

The days of peace

This discussion is as old as the emancipation of the painter's art.

Time was when the Egyptian artist painted by formula at the direction of an over-fed priesthood, the basest and least progressive era of painting with which we are acquainted. In a later time painting, like everything else, fell under the sacerdotal yoke again. It became a soulless convention and relapsed into absolute imbecility.

In those days there was peace in the schools.

The vital qualities

When the cave man of Neanderthal scratched his spirited sketch of the Aurochs on a flat bone he doubtless took time to express his opinion of the lake dweller who did his sketching on a board with a hot pebble.

If you ask Doctor Smith he will tell you, warmly, that in the hands of Titian and Velasquez the art of painting reached its ultimate perfection, beyond which it is impossible to go.

Get your information from Madame Jones and you will learn that the ancients of the sixteenth century were a lot of clever children who painted quite well, considering that they lived three hundred years ago, but that the moderns are really the people—at least those of the impressionist school are.

Professor Brown tells us definitely that the modern academic training gives the youth of today the advantage of half a lifetime, enabling him to begin where the old masters left off—that there are in fact hundreds of painters doing better technical work today than any painter of any previous century.

Doubtless they all are quite right. The world moves on and if the principles of art change not, at least our view point does. The moderns have their own problems—problems which may or may not have concerned the old masters but which thousands of the painters of our day are strenuously and passionately working to solve.

The point of view

It may be and probably is true that there is no vital principle impelling the artists of today which cannot find illustration in the work of some old master. Yet we concern ourselves deeply in this penultimate year of the greatest century of time over qualities which worried our ancestors little or not at all.

Modern problems

There are problems of light and color, modeling and texture, movement and atmosphere which, with all reverence for the great ones of the past, we regard in an essentially modern way.

While the schools differ radically on many questions which seem important enough to quarrel about, there are yet a number of qualities upon which all schools agree, though with differing degrees of emphasis. These may be considered as the vital qualities of painting.

General principles

There are four groups of these qualities which may be classified as composition, color, form and handling, with many minor subdivisions.

As composition we group together chiaroscuro or light and shade values, mass, breadth, contrast, relief and opposition.

Color includes the group of essential qualities known as tone, tint, harmony, vibration, atmosphere, envelope, luminosity, color values and all those things which have to do with the action of light on transparent media and solid surfaces.

The vital qualities

As form we classify all the qualities which relate to drawing, as, line, movement, proportion, mass, grace, perspective.

On handling or technique the vitality of all the other qualities depends: touch, texture and finish are its immediate distinctions. The word covers all that relates to the manipulation of tools and materials and the various processes by which effects are obtained.

"The art which conceals itself is the best art"—once a famous dogma—is now most distinguished in its general disregard.

Much modern work seems indeed to have been produced solely to display the clever manipulation of its author. The bravura or brushwork is a sure passport to recognition with some schools.

Vital qualities

Of a good picture we may say then, that it has luminosity, perhaps brilliancy. It has color, meaning that it is consistent in tone and that all its parts sing together in perfect harmony whether the general effect be somber, grey or dazzling with prismatic tints.

It has atmosphere whether the subject be indoors or out, whether its objects are represented as a yard or a mile away, it will have that envelope of

visible air which in nature is always felt but rarely consciously perceived except by the trained eye.

It has drawing. Its lines and masses are intimately true to nature and its parts in right relation to each other.

It has technique. Its handling is of such firm and unhesitating stroke, its mingling of color so delicate that the sure and practiced hand is evident. The paint is left glossy or dull, rough or smooth, as the various surfaces require.

The combination of these qualities may also give it beauty, brilliancy, power, distinction, repose, mystery, suggestiveness, and so on.

Beyond these there is a certain spiritual quality which to most cultured minds is the very raison d'etré of art, but which cannot be included in this list because it is held to be unessential by some painters who otherwise merit our respect.

"The lust of the eye" is one of the strongest yearnings of human nature. It is a desire which increases with culture and its gratification is one of the purest delights of life. To please the eye is not an ignoble thing. The appeal to the sense of beauty in form and color is well worthy of the best efforts even of a great artist.

The vital qualities

"All good art is praise."—Ruskin.

The brush a mighty teacher

The painter's brush is one of the most potent teachers in the world. In the hands of a Verestchagin its vibrant tones can do more for the cause of peace than can all the oratory of a generation.

The brush of a Fra Angelico can fill the minds of men with reverence; can touch their hearts with a deep yearning for purity and the things that make for righteousness. So uncounted millions of men and women are made happier; their hearts are moved with sympathy for the poor and unfortunate; they are stirred with reverence or uplifted with hope. They are prompted to do justly, to love mercy, to defend the weak, to hasten the better day for which all men look, and this because so many of the painters of our own day are faithful to their mission.

The spiritual qualities

The solemnity of night. The sweet glamour of the mystery of twilight. The majesty of mountains. The joy of sunlit skies. The passion, the pathos, the sadness, the bliss of painted human life. These are the spiritual qualities of art.

The working out of all these qualities and their underlying principles presents to the painter many and difficult problems. Of the thousands of artists who are conscientiously striving for their solution some one is discovering something every day which

will help more or less towards that end. Hence these studio talks. They are the result of much study and many experiments in painting and teaching.

How to enjoy art

The only way to enjoy art is to approach it in a spirit of tolerance. Whatever has impressed other mature minds to their delight or profit is entitled at least to our respectful consideration, though it may ignore or subvert all our cherished doctrines. We may entertain angels unawares.

A picture may contain all the vital qualities here enumerated, but a canvas is by no means to be rejected because of the absence even of several of them. The carping critic comes to a picture in a fault-finding spirit and it will be a wonderful picture indeed if he cannot find it.

The true connoisseur approaches the picture with the intention of enjoying it, and it will be a very bad picture indeed if he is entirely disappointed.

The needful sacrifice

"The greatest picture is that which conveys to the mind of the spectator the greatest number of the greatest ideas."—Ruskin.

From a technical standpoint the greatest picture is that which contains the greatest number of these vital qualities.

One painter may emphasize a certain set of quali-

ties to the neglect of others, as for instance when one sacrifices truth of light and form for the sake of a fine color scheme. Another may sacrifice truth of any kind in order to force a certain sentiment. Where there are so many right ways it is unpardonable egotism to insist on one's own view-point as the very center of truth.

The difference between a sketch and a picture lies primarily in the simpler aim of the sketch.

The sketch and the picture

A sketch may be a record of a single note of color, a memorandum of composition, a pose, a gesture, an outline of any picturesque idea whatever. It states one fact concisely. Its qualities are few. A picture on the other hand aims at fullness and finish, an adding of truths, relating not only the central fact, but commenting and enlarging upon it, giving its relation to many other facts. An artist frequently makes many sketches in preparation for a single picture.

Whatever oddities of style or method a man or a school may develop, careful inquiry will reveal the fact of a serious purpose in it. The oddity indicates a bias towards a certain phase of feeling which to him seems vital and which could not be expressed so well in any other way.

The underlying purpose

The strange liney touch of a Raffaelli probably means more to him and his admirers than a mere

mannerism. The weird dots, lines and commas characteristic of the French pointillist school find admirers and defenders and—yes, even purchasers.

A man can put no more into a picture than he has in himself.

The painter's limitation

This would be a very unfortunate thing for some of us were it not that many spectators are able to find more in a picture than the artist ever put there. Thus an admiring critic sometimes has as much to do with the creation of a great work of art as the painter himself has. He teaches the public what to see there, and it sometimes happens that he sees far above the painter's head. In the same way a suggestive title will work wonders with the spirit of a picture.

Suggestiveness

Suggestiveness is one of the great qualities. It not only stimulates the imagination, but it flatters the spectator by taking his discernment for granted.

When a picture is worked out to the last detail its story is definitely told to the last word. Its charm is soon exhausted, for it has nothing more to say. It offends the amour propre like the story teller who insists on explaining his jokes.

In a suggestive picture one will always find something new and fine at every visit. This is the thing of beauty which is a joy forever.

Mystery is a somewhat similar quality in painting as in poetry. It is continually inviting the imagination to excursions into the realms of all pleasant possibilities.

If it should be objected that many persons are not gifted with imagination the answer is plain that such pictures are not painted for such people. They have their painters of turnips and brass kettles.

Imagination the interpreter

"What is that object in the foreground?" asked a lady of Turner, standing before one of his great canvases.

"What does it look like?" he in turn inquired.

"I think it looks like a wheelbarrow."

"Then it is a wheelbarrow."

The imagination is a good provider of entertainment. It needs only a hint, a gesture to indicate the road and straightway it loses itself in a kingdom of delights of its own creating. The power of art—music, painting or poetry—to do this is of value beyond compare over its power to please the ear or the eye.

Therefore paint broadly and suggestively. Take the intelligence of the spectator for granted. He will be grateful for it. If he sees inferno where you meant the rivers of light, that is his own affair. It is his pleasure so to see.

THE LOST OCTAVES

THE MOST causal observer must have noticed the revolutionary changes in the methods of picture making which have come about in recent times. Invention, discovery, and the natural evolution towards perfection have all been at work —sometimes slowly, but oftener by leaps and bounds.

Evolution in art

The insatiable greed for novelty, developing necessarily out of the competition of great modern picture exhibitions is also responsible for some of these changes.

For the present we are compelled to suspend judgment as to whether all of these changes are for the betterment of art since the doctors disagree so bitterly about even the foundation principles of modern schools.

It has been believed for three centuries past that

the painters of the renaissance pushed the mechanical possibilities of their art to their utmost limit, that painting then attained to a perfection which has not since been equalled.

Looking backwards

It is a fact that ambitious students of today set themselves seriously to study the works of Titian, Raphael and Velasquez with a profound reverence and much profit, but there are not lacking modern critics to tell us that some of these serious moderns have not only wrested from the great canvases their golden secrets, but that they have surpassed their masters even as far as modern science has surpassed the old.

Meantime the chemist has come to the aid of the artist. Steam, electricity and invention have done their part in cheapening and perfecting materials and appliances. At the same time art schools have sprung up all over every land. The accumulated knowledge of the ages is added to the thousand discoveries of our time; eyes are trained to see the things to which the great world is blind, and fingers are trained to a dexterity in manipulation which leaves nothing beyond.

It seems difficult to point out a principle which was not understood by our fathers or a single quality which some old painter did not produce. It is the gathering together of these principles and these innumerable discoveries which gives to the modern painter his strength.

The lost octaves

Truth

As to truth in art—the red rag of the schools—nineteen hundred years ago one of the great ones asked pointedly, "What is truth?" and the Greatest One was silent. He had no answer ready. After all the volumes written and all the hot words hastily spoken on this subject it seems futile to attempt to throw fresh light upon it, and yet—since we must stand somewhere in relation to this question—let us at least examine the ground immediately about our feet.

The real problem

We take up, for instance, truth of light. The subject of the picture, we will say, is a wooded landscape. The lover of truth lays in his sky with a glowing luminous light, then he adds the mass of trees in tint and value correctly, thus forcing the sky by contrast into still greater brilliancy. Again he adds the foliage shadows and bits of dark stems and in doing this he has exhausted the resource of his palette—he has used the darkest thing he has. But nature shows him a hollow tree trunk of still more somber hue and nearer still, among rocks and weeds and logs there are touches of still deeper, infinitely deeper, gradations and yet he can see that they are not black, for they are full of warm and glowing colors.

What should we do about it, leave them out or pretend they are not so dark as they look?

Or try another case, indoors this time. This man will use his umber or Vandyke or black or bitumen,

which is much blacker, for his deep shadows, he will paint his half-tones in their just relief and his gloss and shine and reflex with absolute truth. He will even paint a bit of white drapery or a high light in a vase and still keep within the limits of truth. He has worked from black to white and again reached the limit of his palette. But there is a window in the background with a vista of trees and buildings and sky, and the darkest thing he can see out there is lighter than the lightest thing he has yet done.

The missing octaves

What must he do? Ignore the window or paint it in a lower key, thus painting a falsehood according to his notion of the matter? Suppose for further illustration that a beam of sunlight should suddenly fall across the bit of white drapery, the light value would be instantly raised at least five octaves —reckoning his painted scale as an octave—therefore forever five octaves out of his reach as a painter of truth.

Or suppose again the two pictures are brought together, each having been painted by a conscientious pre-raphelite lover of truth. It will at once be perceived that both have been painted on the same scale and octave, both ranging from black to white, yet we have just seen that there are at least four octaves of light interposing between the sunlight of outdoors and the semi-obscurity of a window-lit room. Shall we accuse either one or both of lying?

No, indeed. Let us keep out of the quarrel and leave these worthy people to settle the matter themselves—if they can.

As for ourselves, we will take the lesson to heart and finding absolute truth of values to be out of reach, since four octaves of light are lost to us, we will at least try to paint honestly our impressions of what we see.

Our impressions—come to think of it—is not that the vital thing after all? What more can be reasonably asked? If we can impress others as nature has impressed us it is enough. Let us devise ways and means.

Our Impressions

First of all we may choose subjects within range of our limited paint and where this is not possible we may translate the low key into a higher or the high key to a lower. When the range of light is too great for our single octave we must condense the five into one and using white for our highest light and the darkest thing we have for the deep shadows will distribute our half tones so as to bring them all within the limited scale at our command.

The picture will certainly lack the brilliancy and vividness of natural sunlight. That is the inevitable weakness of paint. There are some things we can do, however, which will compensate for this weakness.

The weakness of paint

Artists estimate each other solely by their technique. The public estimates the artists' work solely by its subject. "I know what I like but I can't tell you why" is the common formula.

The judgment of artists is the final verdict in every department of art no matter what the first impression of the public may be, therefore questions of technique are of the first importance to all who wish to excel.

Every painter whose work or whose future is of any value has met defeat many times in trying to reach nature's color, perhaps in a sunset sky, perhaps in a flower or even in the burnished neck of a dove. He will have demonstrated to his own dissatisfaction that absolute truth of color is impossible to paint.

The purest and most vivid pigment ever produced is as the grey of death when placed in competition with the burning glory of sunlit clouds. The simplest flower is absolute despair to the painter who presumes to match exactly its tender or glowing hues and yet the brilliancy of the painted sky or the vividness, or the tenderness, or the delicacy of the painted flower is sometimes a marvel of color and a joy to look upon.

The remedy

The ability to produce this semblance of nature is a question of technique. It is a matter of con-

trasts and harmonies and juxtapositions of pigments.

When men began to study landscape seriously from nature, what were the qualities which most impressed them, which they most strove for? We may find the answer in the work of the Barbizon men. Not that they were the earliest, but their work is best known and easiest of access.

A school of greys

It was the tranquility of nature first of all. Then its mystery and the infinite grace of stem and foliage.

The struggle after effect or catchiness had not yet begun; there was no juggling with color to simulate sunshine but the bigness of nature and the majesty of her masses were their all sufficient reason for painting her. It was a school of greys which charmed all the world and its works are eagerly sought after even today. These men felt the poetry of nature and painted poems.

These same great qualities of nature are as potent today to stir the feelings and charm the hearts of men as ever they were.

All men like to be amused. The Kaleiodscopists who confound us with their startling combinations of color and dazzle us with the glare of their painted fireworks are all welcome because they all amuse. The prestidigitateurs who excite our astonishment by their impossible technique, also have

their place. The novelty which is the charm and the curse of modern exhibitions will always fascinate all of us for the passing moment but the picture to live with is the one that appeals to the heart.

The impression of truth

Plato in "The Sophist" urges the need of sometimes departing from exact truth in order to get the appearance of beautiful forms. In painting there are numerous cases in which this departure from exact truth is justified by results. Although we cannot reach the intensity of sunlight there are mechanical means by which we may approach the appearance of its glow and dazzle. Though we find paint too dull to express the glory of nature's colors, we can yet find means to produce much of the impression which nature gives us.

The Dutch picture

The Dutch painters set us an example of reticence in color and light which has a large following among the younger American painters.

A low key and a short scale of light, a careful economy of color, a simple composition and a touching sentiment. This is the formula for a good Dutch picture. Each quality appeals to the imagination and each is within reach without straining or exaggeration. To this school intensity of light and purity of color present no problems.

All the world is not grey mist, however, nor all

the time twilight. So long as humanity loves warmth and light and joy, so long will artists try to paint them. The more difficult the problem the greater the number of courageous painters who will concern themselves about it.

The truth bogey

During the second quarter of this century there arose a great cry after truth in art. The books were full of it. The schools were full of it. The clamor was so great and so continuous that the younger generation began to think that truth had never been told before. It inspired a great movement toward a new and closer analysis of nature.

All the world took its color box and umbrella to the woods, the sea shore, the fields, the mountains. It began to gather facts—facts of light, of color, of movement and more especially and abundantly, facts of detail. Critics and authors alike applauded the movement. It began to seem as if the only purpose of art was to catalogue the facts of nature. The landscapes of the time are amusing in their naive sincerity, their industrious research after utterly worthless detail.

With the inevitable reaction came a saner method, simpler subjects, the suppression of redundant detail, a preference for the larger qualities, for the breadth, the majesty, the poetry, the mystery, the infinity of nature.

Problems of atmosphere and light began to occupy attention, until presently it was found that a new world was opening upon the vision of mankind.

The beautiful vision was not at first welcomed in the camps of the elect. They reviled it and nicknamed it impressionism, but the movement kept on the even tenor of its way, winning fresh admirers every day.

Like many another good thing, as soon as it had won recognition and applause, it became the victim of its friends. Its name was made sponsor for every wild whimsey of the faddist and insane phantasm of the color crank.

The luminarists

Out of the first movement towards impressionism came the luminarists, men who made the study of sunshine their special domain, and out of the whole turmoil has come a rational plein-air method of landscape painting which in spite of the faddist is nearer perfection today than ever it has been before.

During the third quarter of this century Mariano Fortuny struck a new note in the painting of light for which there seemed to have been no preparation. A Spaniard by birth, of warm and glowing temperament, he was one of the first painters to visit the lands of the sun in North Africa, Algiers and Tunis. With this rendering of sunshine studied in the new mode under almost exaggerated conditions and with subjects which naturally lend themselves to brilliant effects, his vivid canvasses fairly dazzled his contemporaries for awhile.

Every phase of sunlight and sun-cast shadow began to be subjected to study and analysis. For fifteen years the walls of the Salon were ablaze with the sparkle, the glow, the dazzle and the glitter of sun-lit surfaces.

Naturally, so much earnest study led to a good deal of fresh knowledge about paint and its possibilities.

Luminosity is a quality much prized in painting, not only in sunlight, but in indoor and other dark pictures. The discoveries of the luminarists have proved an enduring gift.

Madrazo, Rico and a host of lesser investigators have brought down the traditions of the school and added much fresh information.

A saner outcome

Black shadows and sharp edges have gradually given place to color contrasts, loaded lights, broad, cool shadows suffused with reflexes, cool from the sky and warm from the earth, the blue or purple edge of a cast shadow being made to enhance by contrast the warmth of sunlight, just as nature does it.

Nowadays every tyro knows that a shadow need not be black to force light into warmth and vividness, that a reflex lighted shadow gives infinitely more brilliant suggestion of intensity of sunlight, that dark sides should be warm and cast shadows blue with sharp, clean cut edges while the light it-

self owes all its glow to its warmth rather than to its high key.

These things are among the common formulæ taught in every school, but few who use them realize with what incredible pains and through what slow development the knowledge has been added to the common heritage of the world

THE KEY NOTE

IT IS maintained by some writers that the color sense in man is still in a state of evolution. The spectroscope and the photograph take note of a number of colors that are invisible to mortal eyes except through their aid.

Evolution of the color sense

Certain it is that color in the eyes of an Alaskan Indian is a very different thing from the color we know and enjoy in civilized art. There seems a difference even between color as used by an English painter, for instance, and color as seen and understood by a French artist, a difference not altogether accounted for by the difference in temperament and training.

The ultra-refined discrimination of obscure tones

as seen in our best art is something beyond the understanding, if not beyond the perception, of the uncultured eye. The perception of it is as a new sense. The pleasure derived from it is one altogether denied to the untaught.

Complexity of color

No book can take the place of experience with color. Its combinations are infinite. Accidental mixture and juxtaposition are often as exquisite as they are surprising. The mind should be kept alert for them. Only through the medium of thousands of experiments can an adequate knowledge of the powers and possibilities of paint be determined.

Primaries and secondaries are exceedingly rare in nature. We speak of green trees and blue sky, but we use the words only with a general or modified meaning. A blue sky is usually a cool gray. If trees have any pure green in them it occurs in only small points as, for instance, where a leaf transmits sunlight. The mass of foliage is made up of greenish greys of infinite variety.

Accent of color

In every fine work of color there may be found somewhere a touch of primary or secondary, or it may be even tertiary, color which dominates the entire color scheme. It is the key note. Sometimes in a picture of pronounced tonality it will be a touch, a concentration of the leading tone, oftener it will be a color complementary to the mass of the picture. It is said that Sir Edwin Landseer could

never finish a picture without a spot of red somewhere.

A dull grey morning. A slushy road bordered by somber dripping trees. In the distance a woman appears wearing a purple shawl. Instantly the whole landscape lights up with color. The dull green is complemented and enriched, the leaden sky has become a tender lavender. It all vibrates together like a sweet minor chord. It has found its key note.

A group of students watching with delight the shifting reflection of white clouds and white sails and blue sky on tremulous water, mingling with the black shadows of the pier. Out from beneath floats an orange. The students laugh together. It is the revelation of the key note. The sweet little song has suddenly burst into a resonant gloria.

Infinite harmonies of nature

Pick up anywhere a decaying twig, a mossy stone or a withered leaf. Look into the intricacies of its texture, the manifold gradations of its ever changing surface. Each square inch is a complete color scheme, a sufficient basis for a picture, a formula which will be safe to follow.

It is vain to cudgel the weary and bankrupt brain for novel combinations. Go to the nearest rubbish heap and draw at will from an exhaustless treasure house.

There are two distinct conditions of color which should be borne in mind.

Influence of shade on color

In brilliant and warm sunshine its color is diffused over everything until the lights are simply patches of warm yellow, every other color being almost or entirely absorbed in it, while the intensity of the light dazzles the eye to the utter extinction of detail.

In this case the local color and detail will be found rich and distinct in the shadow.

On the contrary, when objects are seen in a neutral light with deep shadows and faint reflexes the local color and detail will be found mostly in the lights, both being lost in the obscurity of deep shadows.

Remember that the color of sunlight varies continually. It is usually yellow but may vary through red to orange and even to green and other cool tones.

Morning light

On a warm, clear morning while the cool grey draperies of night still cling about the tree and mountain shadows the yellow of slanting sunbeams is intensified by contrast. There is no pigment in the palatte too warm to express their glow. At the zenith the sky is blue, consequently all the light falling into the shadows is blue.

When the sun rises rosy, shining through a film of high fog bank after a cool, misty night the world

is pink and violet, to many eyes the most beautiful expression of color in nature when seen over a dewey cool green foreground.

The purple vice

The abuse or exaggeration of this effect gives rise to "the purple vice." Beware of it. It is the leaven of the pseudo-impressionist. Purple, lavender, violet and their nameless brood are the most seductive tones of the palette to a half-trained eye and a source of boundless joy to the most cultured sense when laid on with the myriad gradations of a master touch and balanced into perfect music by their true affinities.

Tonality

What has just been said of the color of sunlight gives the key to the quality known as tone without which no picture can satisfy the mind—or the jury. Whatever may be the prevailing tone of the light be it indoors or out, be it pink, orange, yellow or blue, every touch and tint laid on must be suffused with it more or less. Some of the old painters are said to have depended on glazes and varnishes for this tone. What is called the mellowing of a picture by age is nothing more than yellowing of the tone by the oxidizing of the oils.

It is related that one of the late eighteenth century curators of the Louvre Galleries, himself a Netherlander, that he "restored" all the Dutch pictures in the collection with a golden yellow varnish. Their rich golden tone is the admiration of old master worshippers to this day.

It often happens that where a subject is first laid in with a few simple masses it seems entirely satisfactory as a theme. Afterwards when the canvas is all covered with the tones intended, that is, when the background is in, we find the thing stale, flat and profitless. It is not what we meant at all. The remedy is to go back to first conditions. The color or value of the canvas was the proper complement to the subject. The components of the canvas color formed the proper tone, or the light value of the canvas was the proper relief for it, probably both.

In the early morning while the blue of the sky is the dominating note we say the tone is cool. In the blazing orange of an afternoon sun everything is permeated with its warmth. A pure blue or cold purple is impossible under such a light. We say the scene is warm in tone. So it is said of a picture that it has tone when every part is kept consistently subordinate to the key of color adopted for it, whether it be gray, yellow, red or blue.

The "Old Master" tone

The yellowing of the picture by age will sometimes give it tone which it lacked originally. The word is sometimes used to mean a certain diffused warmth. There are still some people living who affect to believe that the brown and yellow tone of the old masters is beautiful and that their pictures were originally so painted. To them "tone" means yellow varnish.

The key note

This tonality is an important thing to be considered in planning a picture. It should agree with the time and sentiment of the subject. Obviously red or yellow would be wrong for a moonlight. A blue toned "noon" would be just as bad.

Most eyes delight in rich, warm color and most pictures of exceptionally good tone are painted in a warm key. The essential thing, however, is the perfect consistency of all the colors with each other, every dot and dash being permeated more or less by the tonal color.

Color harmonies

Language is a slow way and a poor way of expressing ideas. Many books there are on the subject of harmony of color with many fanciful theories of harmony, but all the books ever written cannot value a single half-hour spent with a fine work of some master colorist.

None of the theorists provide for the exquisite, heart-gladdening combinations which seem almost accidental in the painting and which nature flings into every corner with lavish abundance.

The color sense

To a savage perhaps there may be but six colors, red, blue, yellow, purple, green and orange. These have a distinct individuality which is obvious to every intelligence. Citron, russet and olive are also permitted to be known by name to those who read.

The six colors are like the harmonic notes of a bugle, stirring the blood and waking the imagination, but they are little capable of expressing sentiment except in the hands of a consummate master.

But what of the limitless, nameless, brood, progeny of the three primaries, which to the untutored are simply grey. Every tint of them are individual to the artist as the faces of his own children. These are the materials out of which pictures are made, materials which nature uses so lavishly and so carelessly as to astound us with her bounty.

Red, blue and yellow art delighted the souls of the Egyptians six thousand years ago as it delights the souls of infants and Indians today. So do violet, orange and green satisfy the eye cravings of pseudo-impressionists. The cultured mind and eye find their uttermost joy in the company of that limitless, nameless brood of greys with only a family resemblance to the primary stocks from which they sprang.

The truth is that harmony of color defies analysis and overrides theories. How often we have been told that a blonde must not wear yellow nor a brunette violet, yet in practice we find that both find their most fitting splendor in the things that are forbidden them.

Yet, experience has taught us a number of formulæ, which may be relied on to always please. These formulæ are useful. It is wise to have a good stock of them always in memory but the exquisite arrangements which surprise and delight us in art are oftenest the result of momentary inspiration or of accident.

Simple harmonies

A grey day. A simple grey sky with infinite delicate gradations of cool color accented at the horizon with dark mountains or trees. A foreground of tender green grading into sky greys in the distance. A tree or a building for shadow. Behold a color scheme perennially sweet like an old Gregorian chant!

A strong purple or rich brown dark horizon against a gleaming yellow sky. A foreground in cool low half tones with warm sky reflexes. The stock in trade of many an old painter. Contrast of color is frequently used as relief in the same way as shade values. A spot of bright color will often accent an important incident in the picture quite as well as a high light or shadow will, and without disturbing the composition. Contrast is also used as a means of forcing the brilliancy of color. The warmth and intensity of sunshine are equally enhanced by contrasting the orange or yellow light with blue or purple shadows.

Value of contrast

"Who ever saw a red horse with a blue shadow?" exclaimed a critic the other day.

Some untaught people will tell you that they do not see shadows always blue. True, neither does the artist, for that matter. Both see the golden glare of sunshine. That vivid contrast of color is the only way to get it in paint. The small truth of color is sacrificed to gain the greater truth of light.

Sacrificing small truths for greater

The burning glory of a sunset sky or the dazzling brilliancy of midday sunshine are not attainable in paint, but by means of this sacrifice of color truth we can come a little nearer to it. It is worth while to make almost any sacrifice to come even a little nearer.

This question of the influence of colors on each other has always a lively interest. For instance, a rosy cloud may be found on experiment to have no red in it at all. It is made to appear rosy by a slight greenish hue in the blue, being actually a neutral grey.

Color a question of contrast

In nature grey is sometimes so altered by its surroundings that it is difficult to find its components in paint. The difficulty is solved by simply holding up in front of it a brush charged with any known color. The contrast will reveal the composition of the obscure tone. All greys being compositions of red, blue and yellow it is easily seen which predominates and which is lacking.

The key note

Acrobatic painters

There are painters who feel great enough to ignore the beauty of color, who delight in strange, weird, bizarre combinations, talking slang, punning, even swearing in color. Why? Perhaps to advertise their cleverness. Certainly, not to make the world wiser.

When we speak of color we think of something distinct from colors. The

"Greenery yallery
Grosvenor gallery
Out of the way young man"

of Gilbert and Sullivan's opera "Patience" marked an era in history. The civilized world was just then awakening to the fact of a higher life of the senses and through them a higher spiritual life. The æsthetic craze came and passed but left behind it a saner understanding of beauty in color which then came to be recognized as something finer, richer and worthier than mere colors.

Distinction

It is no uncommon thing to see an amateur produce and destroy the finest color schemes apparently without having recognized them. Some temperaments seem to feel color instinctively, to find beautiful combinations without effort and to recognize harmonies readily. This gift may be the result of fortunate environment, or it may be inherited. It is this inherent ability to seize and utilize the rarer and finer harmonies which gives the quality we know as "distinction" in color.

Evolution of the palette

A young artist usually begins by experimenting with every color he can find. Experience will teach him to select those pigments which best suit his purpose, his palette becoming continually simpler. The present century has seen the invention or discovery of many new pigments each having some special excellence of its own. Certain cliques are now beginning to discard all the earths as being illogical broken tints or impure color mixtures. The tendency seems to be continually towards the use of pure colors, primaries and secondaries, chemical products all of them.

A palette of broken tints—umbers, siennas, ochres, etc.—is useful in unskilled hands in counteracting any tendency towards crudeness. The pure color palette on the other hand may do harm in encouraging mere prettiness of color to the neglect of the more sober and refined harmonies.

"The 'Light Red' humbug" is the way a noted Parisian teacher once referred to the use of earths and other broken tones.

There may be something in it, but another generation will be needed to prove the worth of the new mode. Meanwhile we will remember that for some hundreds of years painters have been limited almost solely to those imperfect and broken tones and they produced with them some works which merit our respectful consideration.

Try ultramarine, alizarine crimson and aurora yellow. Almost every shade and tint under the sun can be produced from them with flake white. If they were all absolutely pure and transparent colors nothing more could be desired.

A decorative tendency

It is admitted on all sides that the tendency of the neo-impressionist movement is towards the decorative in color rather than the purely natural and imitative. If this is freely admitted by the school as it is by many of its leading exponents the last remnant of objection to impressionism vanishes.

Impressionist color has always, or rather usually been beautiful, though often extravagant. The world wept over it only when it was told that impressionists really saw Nature as they painted her. So long as we tolerate satyrs, dragons and brownies in art we cannot reasonably object to the purple cow or the blue milkmaid. They are alike creatures of the imagination. If they have beauty they fulfill their mission.

Broad planes of well considered color, pure colors or simple mixtures, delicate but simple harmonies; these are the characteristics of the best decorative painting. It is always more or less conventional in color and often conventional in drawing as well.

The light and color of the mural work of Puvis de Chavannes was never seen on land or sea, but

their beauty and aptness has never been questioned.

When we have learned to distinguish between imaginative and decorative work and frankly put each in its place we have removed another hindrance to our peace.

TECHNIQUE

A PICTURE is finished when the means taken to produce it are completely hidden." *Whistler.*

This motto has been held for many years as an unassailable dogma with painters of all schools down to these degenerate days when smart painting is thought to be its own reason for being.

Value of method

A great orator is known by his abundance of ideas, his fervid or passionate delivery, his appropriate language and perfect modulation of voice. Even a commonplace subject becomes important and is dignified by his manner of delivery.

So in the hands of a great painter a bold, brilliant, masterly handling of the brush with a refined and original color sense may dignify and make splendid even the flimsiest theme.

Facile brushwork is an easy flow of language. Correct manipulation is good grammar. Composition is its rhetoric. If fine words clothe a fine idea so much the better.

There be some wise men who speak but stammeringly and some clever talkers who have nothing to impart. So it is in painting. This is why there are so many empty canvases.

The language of paint

Painting is a language simply. A cultured speaking voice with a sweet tone and an easy command of words is a pleasant thing to listen to but it must express ideas to hold our attention. Sweet color and facile brushwork, all the mechanical qualities of a picture are good and pleasant things, but if they fail to instruct or amuse or move us they are meaningless gabble.

Men paint much as they talk. Color and brushwork may be flippant, audacious or insolent. They may degenerate into even a pun. There are canvases which seem forever shouting with a conceited swagger "Me voila!"

The eye is much keener of perception than is the consciousness. Every surface in nature is made up

Disintegration of color

of an infinite multitude of varied colors so minute that the mind is unconscious of them but if we substitute for any natural surface a flat tint of paint the eye rejects the imitation at once even before the understanding is appealed to.

If a bit of Bouguerreau's flesh painting is examined closely it will be found to be composed of minute dots of the various tints into which flesh color decomposes under the minutest scrutiny, the rose tones of the blood, the lavender of the veins, the pale violet of the high light and ruddy greys of the darks; a complex touch only realized by enormous labor. A square inch will contain hundreds of little dots laid side by side with masterly knowledge and infinite patience. Seen at the proper distance they blend in a perfectly harmonious color. The result is an effect of imitation almost illusive.

Many other painters have many other methods of arriving at the same effect, all depending on the mingling of component tints without complete mixture. This is known as "the disintegration of color" and its object is the quality known as "vibration."

Most modern painters prefer to take the various tints which make up a color and allow the brush to mix them very slightly in the act of laying on with a swift stroke. The result satisfies the eye and the end is attained with but little labor.

One of the most eminent of French luminarists was Manet, father of the impressionist school. He produced his marvelous color by laying side by side alternate strokes in pastel, of the component tints of any given color, trusting to distance to mingle them into the required tone. All the world knows with what surprise and delight his magical creations were greeted when shown together at the Academie des Beaux Arts in Paris.

Many hands took up the problem and carried Manet's analysis to its logical conclusions. For a long time the disintegration of color has been an accepted doctrine and common practice.

"Consider nature a Mosaic of various colors and reproduce them stroke for stroke. Does it make a sort of fresco? Yes, something even better. Mosaic." —Ruskin.

The fresh, clean touch

The freshness and clearness of color laid on the canvas with a single stroke is the foundation secret of brilliant painting, the basis of much of the best technique.

When each tint and gradation is studied and mixed on the palette, put into its place with one touch and then carefully left alone we get what Ruskin refers to as "Mosaic." Seen close at hand some eyes may be offended by its apparent want of unity, like a brass band heard too near, but the proper distance merges it all into music.

Technique

"Should a brush handle be three feet or five feet in length?"

The apochryphal quarrel over this question among the pre-Raphaelites may have had a grain of truth in its origin. As men become more skilled in technique they seek more and more to paint from a distance that the blending of disintegrated color may be seen as it progresses.

Outdoor painting

The problems which most occupy the attention of modern painters and discriminate the new art from the old are mostly the result of the plein-air movement. There is no evidence that any of the old painters ever studied their subjects in the open air. On the contrary, it seems evident that their out-of-door subjects were painted in dimly-lit rooms, resulting in a conventional and unnatural color. The first good out-door work is yet but little more than a century old, while the general acceptance and practice of out-door work is less than half that age.

Value of the first Impulse

Every painter has experienced more or less of the pleasure and surprise of making a brilliant and beautiful sketch under the impulse of a strong feeling and afterwards the bitterness of ruining the same in the attempt to carry it forward to a finish.

There are two reasons operating towards this disastrous result, one of which is purely mechanical. In the haste and rush of urgent expression the mixture of pigments is incomplete, edges are left undefined and details neglected, everything is subordinate to

the one idea, the raison d'etre of the sketch. The swift stroke is full of grace, the hasty mixture is full of little refinements of gradation, little runs of color, little accidental harmonies which the mind is scarcely capable of thinking out systematically. The imperfect contours and hasty brushing are full of suggestions which appeal to the mind as well as the eye.

The other reason is an intellectual one. The stimulus of a strong emotion makes the senses keen and the thinking clear. Values are perceived and given with truth with a stroke bold and accurate.

The attempt to improve such work as this in cold blood and a judicial temper is like patching cloth of gold with twelve ounce duck. The original impulse being expended can never be revived again. Neither learning nor patience can take its place.

Decorative art and fine art

Imitation is an instinct with the human being. We point to the etching of prehistoric man and the elaborate carving of every aboriginal race and call it art. The name is wrong. Call it decoration. Art, fine art, is a later development in the higher culture of the senses and refinement of the spirit. It deals not only with the imitation of objects as such, but uses them as means of stirring the emotions and teaching men to see and love the things which make for a nobler life.

Until a man paints with the hope or with the wish to stir the minds of his fellows to better thinking

and their hearts to better living or to make some creature happier or wiser he has not understood the meaning of art. Its purpose

"Pas de peluche, pas de peinture"—Carolus Duran.

In the painting of plush by this great master we find the richest and strongest effects of which paint is capable, proving that he practiced what he preached.

The sheen of plush in vivid contrast with its deep and glowing shadows, the graceful play of light and local color over its surface, the satisfactory harmony which is characteristic of the fabric, all unite in rendering plush a most desirable object of study and as background in portraiture or accessory in still life its distinguished richness renders it occasionally indispensable.

A smear of paint here, a dab there, a crisp outline, a touch of bright color or an accent of shadow yonder, balancing masses, adjusting tones, keeping the entire conception in mind all the time and noting the effect of every touch. This is the way to plan a picture. Method

If you begin at one end and proceed like a carpenter driving nails into a fence your work will have about the same æsthetic value.

"Chechez delibrementt mais travaillez avec passion." Boulanger's advice to students at Julian's.

The result of the method is rapid work. Any errors or shortcomings in the composition will be discovered before much work is done; consequently alterations are easily made and no labor is wasted.

Thoroughness

Many a good reputation has been spoiled by putting out imperfect work. The necessary changes involved too much work or the painter lacked the courage to paint out the offending part.

There is a good remedy for an unsatisfactory picture which has already cost much labor—two coats of white lead. A clean canvas has more value than a bad picture.

Time and labor

Time or labor, indeed, has little to do with the matter. A man may work for a week after a certain effect and fail to get it. At another time, in another mood or with fresh insight he may succeed in ten minutes. Which picture, think you, has the greater value, the failure which cost time and labor or the success due to a happy accident?

The week of labor added absolutely no value to the picture. The successful tour de force, done in a short morning may bring more joy to the artist and to the world than would a month of industrious but uninspired niggling.

Technique

We may pile on paint an inch thick and experiment and perspire from morn to dewy eve, through weary weeks and changing seasons but it all counts for nothing until the magical stroke is given which fully expresses the idea. Whether that stroke comes soon or late there is no picture until it does arrive.

Moral: Don't be afraid of labor. No one can work intelligently with brush and paint without learning something. Therefore the labor is not wasted. You have at least learned what not to do. It all counts on the next picture.

A too facile trick of the brush sometimes degenerates into something very like slang when a clever, catchy stroke or a telling combination of colors is used to give effect to all kinds of subjects without regard to time, place or season.

Impasto

Of the various methods of laying on paint impasto is the chief and in many subjects the only available way. Aside from its robust and solid appearance it is the only method which is absolutely permanent. Its great body is security against change.

Thin painting will often sink into the ground color. Glazes are easily abraded or removed on account of their slightness. Still it is the custom of many painters to load the lights heavily for the sake of texture and high light and to paint shadows thinly and smoothly where texture is lost in obscurity.

The more modern way is to paint heavily throughout with a large and full brush, seeking after light and atmosphere rather than richness and depth.

There is something very satisfying to the eye in the rich, fat, generously laid canvas even if nothing else were gained by it.

Unless in the hands of a skilled master a thinly painted canvas suggests meagreness and weakness. A Bouguerreau or a Meissonier may paint as he will. His genius is master of his material.

Misapplied labor

With a long haired, supple brush loaded with fat color and a clean, crisp, quick touch, a certain rich quality of surface is developed which is brilliant in itself. Dabbling and teasing the paint with the brush, smoothing, blending and fondling the color makes mud of the purest pigments while it destroys every vestige of texture.

In a brilliant style of handling the colors remain clean and the touch crisp. Delicate modulations will round the surfaces without the need of unduly mixing colors together. When color is thickly laid on, the touches will blend insensibly at the edges of their own accord.

If laid on with a long, flexible knife instead of a brush the effect of solidity with delicacy of color is greatly enhanced, but the knife lacks precision in

drawing minute forms and details. These are much better added with a brush.

The knife is also a powerful tool in getting certain rough textures like rocks, gravel and tree trunks. The abuse of impasto results in paintiness where the paint by its excessive roughness becomes more obvious than its intention.

Glazing

Glazing has a magical effect in deepening or warming shadows or enriching colors, also in adding delicate tints and modifying gradations of color already laid on and perfectly dry.

To test the dryness of paint breathe on it. If the breath dims the surface evenly it is dry enough to work over.

Any transparent color will do for glazing when diluted with some colorless medium like meglip oil, or retouching varnish and brushed thinly.

Scumbling

Scumbling expresses air, smoke, mist, dust and the like where these things must be added over paint already dry. Use thick body color, driving it very thinly with a stiff brush. These thin paintings would better be avoided, however, when it is possible, because they are so easily abraded.

Mediums

Many mediums have been invented for the dilution of tube colors. They are one and all objectionable for one reason or another. Practice demonstrates that wherever pigments must be diluted the

meek and lowly coal oil will do the most good and the least harm. It will not yellow with age or darkness like the vegetable oils. It will not dry too fast and crack like varnishes. It will not dry mat like turpentine. It will not dry sticky or crack like megilp, but it will stick readily to any surface. It works easily and spreads evenly and after it has answered its purpose it will evaporate entirely, leaving the color pure.

The mat surface

For its brilliant atmospheric quality the mat effect is much valued by some landscape painters. Absorbent grounds are sometimes used to promote it. Sometimes turpentine is added to the pigment after its oil has been removed by blotting paper. Rapid and repeated painting is sure to produce the mat surface.

The chief fault of this method is that the dark colors sink so that their true values and colors are not seen. A little very dilute retouching varnish rubbed on with a bit of rag or an old brush will reveal the color at once. It should be rubbed on thinly. Varnishes are very likely to crack the paint later on.

Varnish

A still better varnish for mat pictures is white of egg beaten to a froth and spread thinly with a large brush. It brings out the color, preserves the pigments from gas and smoke and can be washed off and renewed whenever the picture requires cleaning.

Technique

The chief value of the mat surface lies in its power of keeping its brilliancy under artificial light. A varnished picture will reflect more or less all the shadows in the room. In an evening exhibition under gas or electric light the mat picture has an immeasurable advantage.

Drying

Some of the more delicate and transparent tube colors are very bad dryers. They may remain for weeks on the canvas and still smear with a touch of the hand. The smallest possible quantity of sugar of lead will insure prompt drying and will not injure the color.

A great change in manipulation of recent years has led to a revision of all old methods. The newest school seems inclined to reject varnish entirely as causing an injury to the tone and durability of the work. Especially do the plein-air and luminarist schools condemn it, for its use destroys all the splendid qualities gained by a high key and a mat surface.

The envelope

Paint the other side of things. How often we find a portrait, for instance, swimming in its background, like a potato swimming in water, half in and half out.

The other side may be suggested by the touch. A stroke somewhat parallel to the outline of a rounded surface will foreshorten the edges and carry it round.

The management of the cast shadow is also important in detaching an object from its background. The farther the shadow falls from the object the farther back will the background appear.

The touch

The painter's touch is not a sweep, but a stroke or pat of the brush intended to lay color on and not to remove it. First one side of the brush and then the other, changing its direction at every stroke and rolling it round in the fingers this way or that to give the edge decision or softness, as the case requires.

Textures

There are hundreds of little tricks of handling which are acquired in the attempt to imitate surfaces. The touch which expresses the foliage of an oak perfectly will not answer at all for the foliage of an eucalyptus or a fig tree and no foliage touch will interpret the texture of rough bark.

Texture is one of the important factors of good brushwork. Every different material shows a different kind of surface which is only rightly expressed by a touch peculiar to it. Hamerton says of a certain figure painter: "Everything in his picture was metallic except the armor; that was leathery."

So we see trees looking like bags of potatoes and flesh like putty, rocks looking soft and transparent and skies as solid as rocks. The development of the surface of things is one of the crucial tests of the painter's skill.

Technique

It has been said that the world of art students is divided between those who swear by Bouguereau and those who swear at him.

In truth there is a deal of water flowing between his patient dot by dot, small-sable execution and the method of Rafaelli, who lays his whole canvas in with soft cloudy masses of uncertain color and then gives definition to contours and surfaces alike by means of dark pen-like lines.

And between these extremes there is also much safe and sound texture painting by many methods, and plenty of room still left for discovery and invention.

Training the eye

There are plenty of intelligent people who cannot tell one horse from another of the same color. Comparatively few people can tell one sheep from another. Yet they have no difficulty in knowing one human face from another even though the difference is much less than in the case of the sheep.

Most people recognize a vertical line when they see it. Many people know a right angle at sight. Some know an angle of forty-five degrees but very few know an angle of thirty or fifty or eighty degrees. Why? Because they are not in the habit of comparing angles, while their well-being depends on their habit of comparing faces.

The secret of drawing

This is the whole secret of drawing, the habit of comparison. Comparing height with width, comparing angles, values and relative positions. With the skilled draughtsman this habit is practised unconsciously. Doubtless individuals differ in their aptitude in acquiring this habit, but anyone who can tell one face from another can learn to draw.

Learning thus to distinguish angles and triangles is a rapid method of learning to compare forms, that is, learning to draw. There will be comparatively little difficulty with the fingers.

Value of clay modeling

As generally used, the word drawing refers to outline only, but it should be understood that outline is but a part of all that is included as drawing. It is comparatively easy for the eye to distinguish bulk and outline. The modulation of surface is another and more difficult thing because changes of plane and direction are marked by the most delicate gradations of shade, gradations which are often invisible to the untrained eye.

This is why clay modeling is recommended for students in drawing and painting. To draw intelligently it is necessary to feel the plasticity of the subject, its mass and projection in space.

Beginners are too apt to think of their drawing as a flat thing or a flat surface. Clay modelling dispels this idea at once.

Technique

A careful drawing before beginning to paint is imperative with the beginner. It is not that the point is better than the brush as a drawing instrument, but because the deliberate study necessary for a good drawing gives a thorough acquaintance with the subject. Without this thorough knowledge brilliant handling and true character are impossible.

The difficulties

There are five distinct difficulties to be overcome by the beginner in painting. Take them one at a time and master them as you go.

First draw patterns or figures in outline. The models may be either flat or solid but proportions must be determined by the eye alone.

Next modulation of surfaces or shading follows. Plaster makes the best model because it has no gradation of local color to confuse the shading.

Painting may begin as soon as the ability has been acquired to make a correct drawing quickly. Learn to lay a flat tone accurately.

The fourth point is to make a perfect gradation of color.

Lastly learn to grade color and shade at the same time. It is in this stage that the hundreds of little tricks of brush and fingers are acquired upon which good technique depends.

This is the ideal way. Most beginners take all these five difficulties at once and after floundering helplessly for awhile give it up—or go back and begin right—more or less. You will probably do the same.

Analysis of the subject

It is important to know what to look for. Almost every familiar surface may be formulated in a way which will render its study easier. For instance, near foliage in sunshine will always present at least four important characteristic components of its color. The local color may be found strongest in the dark or in the light but the upper surfaces of leaves always reflect more or less of the grey or blue of the sky. The most brilliant points of color will be found in the transmitted lights where the sun shines through the leaf. The dark side of the mass for these reasons will always be greyer than the light. The accent of deep tree shadows is almost invariably warm.

Painting the air

The air is always visible. There is a subconscious perception of it though the eye does not always take note of it. Envelop your subject in air no matter how near it may be or in what light. The envelope is an essential quality of light and color.

On a foggy day the mist envelope is very obvious. All objects are seen more or less veiled, the more distant becoming more and more obscured un-

til they are finally hidden. The difference in mist values is very apparent between an object ten feet away and another ten yards away.

To see the air in the same way requires a little more delicate perception and to represent these infinitessimal differences requires a nicely balanced judgment and careful manipulation.

Aerial perspective

Shadows are more sensitive to this air envelope than are the lights. Thus the toning of the darks of a picture, giving them more and more grey or blue as they recede, will always render a satisfactory perspective to the eye.

The chief quality of a clear sky is its translucency and this is exactly the most difficult of all qualites to reproduce.

We can make a flat tint look a very long way off, pushing it back by means of the horizon, but a flat tint is always a flat surface and the sky has no surface but infinite depth. A fleeting cloudlet will push it back still further, but it will be a wall whenever you come to it.

Translucency of skies

A clouded or mottled sky is easier to manage because its members are seen to be beyond each other, suggesting various planes of distance, and if the blue is of small surface the imagination easily makes the leap as into a limitless vault.

The clearest sky is full of gradation from the grey of the horizon to the blue of the zenith. To this is added the faint mottling of suspended vapor, a tenuous, impalpable veil of shifting, shimmering light, invisible to any but the practiced eye.

Most painters lay in a soft rosy grey over the upper sky and into this the blue is touched with a delicacy which is true according to its refinement. Sometimes the reverse course is followed, the blue being laid on first. Whatever method is adopted it should be remembered that the essential quality of a clear sky is its translucency.

No one but an experienced painter can realize the beauty and the wealth of color to be seen in a cloudy sky.

Sunlit clouds are usually tinged with rose or orange in the light, grading to cool grey in the shadows, coolness and darkness varying according to the density or depth of the cloud. Into this grey the warm light penetrates with infinite gradations. In the greyest and gloomiest skies, when it is not actually raining, we find these beautiful gradations of warm light and cold shadow modified by endless accidents of reflection and contrast.

Movement in cloud drawing

One of the loveliest manifestations of the poetry of motion is the rising of wood smoke on a moderately calm day. Neither pen nor paint can ade-

quately describe the swaying, sinuous, curling, capricious grace of its movements and its infinite variety of beautiful form and color.

Clouds, too, have something of the same grace of form and movement, but to this is added the impressiveness of space, the majesty of enormous mass.

To beauty of form and color and motion we must add also semi-transparency and lightness. A painted cloud which does not seem to float of its own buoyancy looks dangerous. Its weight is a menace to the rest of the landscape.

The secret is all in the intermingling of tones, an interpenetration of mist and air and light which interprets its translucency.

Industry

It is not to be supposed that the reading of a book, no matter how exhaustive, or the listening to a course of lectures, no matter how lucid, will ever give the ability to paint well. Good painting is the result of dexterity of hand, an intimate knowledge of pigments and the essential qualities of objects.

These things can only be acquired by practice, hundreds and thousands of experiments in light, color and touch, the effect of brush on paint, of tints and pigments on one another.

The story is never fully told, and the power of paint or pen can never express entirely the glory or the strength of the conception which impelled it. The best is still withheld, inexpressible in human terms.

Our best songs are still unsung; our best thoughts are still unuttered and must so remain until eyes and ears and hands are quickened by a diviner life to a keener sensibility.

Much of the bad techinque we ridicule is in reality only a pathetic impulse of the voiceless to utter the joy of beauty which clamors for expression, the wordless and tuneless songs which, big with emotion, swell the mute heart almost to bursting.

COMPOSITION

THERE is no surer sign of the decadence of art than the search after formulæ, striving to lay down rules in imitation of the methods of the past, as if discovery were dead.

Conventionality

The modern renaissance of art was simultaneous with its emancipation from tradition. Almost every rule and dogma of the old painters finds refutation in some splendid recent canvas.

It is no longer safe to lay down rules of composition. Some mannerless fellow is sure to prove their futility tomorrow. The best we can do is to make some suggestions showing how others have succeeded, which will at least be helpful for a beginning.

When Sir Joshua Reynolds stated in one of his Royal Academy lectures that blue could not be used with good effect except in small masses Gainsborough immediately painted his famous "Blue Boy," a picture which is all blue—one of the most splendid things of its day.

Sir Joshua's explanation was "The 'Blue Boy' does not disprove the rule; it only proves how great a painter is Gainsborough who can afford to ignore rules."

There are, in fact, men great enough to override all the theories ever expounded and plenty of men who seek to prove their greatness by breaking all the rules they ever heard of.

Some accepted principles

Nevertheless there are certain arrangements of light, lines and color which all men accept as good. The Greek honeysuckle ornament has delighted the eyes of men for twenty-five centuries. The eye and mind acccpt it at once as a pleasing arrangement of lines. A simple transposition of its details proves at once that the beauty lies not in the lines themselves, but in their arrangement.

It is useless to ask why. Beauty is an arbitrary thing defying reason. We only know that certain combinations of lines, masses, shades, lights or colors will please the majority of eyes, while other arrangements of the same things are unanimously rejected.

Analysis of light modulation

Allowing for the proverbial exception which proves the rule any work of good chiaroscuro will present several distinct points of interest.

It will have a mass of light half-tones of which some point, called the high light, will be lighter than anything else in the picture. It will have a mass of dark half-tones of which some point called the accent will be darker than all the rest. If the composition has any complication at all the principal light will have an echo in a subordinate light of smaller area and lower key. The main shadow will also have its echo and all the masses will be full of gradation, no absolutely flat tone anyhere.

Breadth and detail

Intense concentration of the sight on any detail gives it for the moment an exaggerated importance. When every detail of a composition passes successively under this "searching" process the resulting picture is an agglomeration of units, each clamoring to be seen first.

Seek rather to make the entire picture a single unit subordinating every detail to the general conception according to its relative importance. Most young eyes see too much. Try more for breadth.

In nature there is such an intimate mingling of shadows and reflexes that objects have the appearance of merging into each other by their edges. A hard edge is always offensive. It can only be ex-

cused when its purpose is to force an object forward or bring it into special relief.

A good easel picture has the qualities of a good short story. Its plan is simple. It tells its tale without unnecessary detail. Its incidents are clear cut and well relieved. Its local color true and characteristic and its language of the best.

The most exquisite outline or the most subtle modulation of form is utterly without value if it is lost in its surroundings. The use of relief is a thing to be considered with the greatest care lest it become an abuse and the composition be shattered to fragments by making everything equally emphatic.

Relief

The thing best worth painting in the picture should be so contrasted and relieved by its surroundings that it will be the first thing to attract the eye with the accent placed where it will be most effective, as the picturesque branching of a tree, the head of a figure or some important part of its outline or mass. Everything else is accessory, each incident taking just so much relief as its importance requires and no more. When everything in the picture is equally prominent it becomes unintelligible like a roomful of women all talking at once.

"Cavé on Colour" is an old book on water color painting. Among other good things it recommends

laying in all the shadows with a wash of black before using color at all. The method is commended because it insures transparency of shadows with breadth and simplicity of composition, which amply compensates for the slight loss of color.

The theme of a picture is the melody to which its surroundings form a harmony, subordinate but adding force and beauty.

The purpose of a picture

A picture is meant to be enjoyed. It should be equally pleasing at any distance within the limits of the room where it hangs. Its carrying quality depends on its relief. If that is right it will look well and tell at least the outline of its story wherever it can be seen.

Breadth and finish

Few painters have the power to preserve breadth and carrying quality and at the same time give the work a minute and elaborate finish. If anything must be sacrificed let it be the finish.

Variety is the essential quality of picturesqueness. Symmetry, the chief beauty of conventional decoration, has no place in fine art.

Symmetry and variety

In posing a composition of flowers or other similar objects they are continually falling into lines, circles, triangles and other geometrical figures. They never look picturesque until we get every suspicion of symmetry out of them. In a study of animals we

aim to get variety of pose, of groupings of values and colors. The greater their variety the more life and character will the picture possess.

So in landscape. A dozen trees may look alike at the first glance. Careful seeking will show one a little taller, another a little greyer, another a little darker than the rest. When these differences are accented three results a pleasing variety which gives character to the individual and to the whole work.

Character

The characteristic quality of any object, whatever it may be, is the point to be insisted on and accented

If a pond or a tree or a mountain were placed exactly in the middle of a picture it would apear to divide the composition into halves with a suggestion of symmetry and a failure of variety. Parallel or concentric lines too have a geometric formality which is unpicturesque. It is the business of the painter to so choose his point of view or arrange his models that picturesqueness may not be sacrificed.

Picturesqueness

The element of picturesqueness depends largely on variety and irregularity for its charm. A sky line broken by mountains or buildings, towers, domes, spires, trees, anything indeed which will give variety of bulk, shape and outline, somehow add to the gratification of the beholder. A row of domes or spires or trees exactly alike would excite no such pleasure. Variety is the essential quality.

Composition

One of the most powerful means of appeal to the imagination is contrast. The opposition of a dark against a light thing is obvious as a means of relief, so is the contrast of complimentary colors in searching for harmony.

Contrast of line and mass

There is a subtler source of power in the contrasting of things having dissimilar physical qualities as, for instance, the fairy tracery of birch branches against a distant mountain, the firm level line of a distant bay shore in contrast with the undulating contour of rugged mountains behind it, the spider web lines of shipping seen against massive cumulus clouds or a low barred sky seen through tall tree stems.

IN THE world of art the lines of cleavage run in so many directions that it is almost impossible to conceive it as a homogeneous entity or to divide it into a few well defined groups. Schools of painting

Certain schools may differ with a mortal enmity and yet find many points of agreement on certain principles which are wholly denied by still other schools .

It is safe to say, however, that in the study of nature, landscape artists are definitely divided into two camps, working on diametrically opposed lines.

Sit down before the choicest bit of scenery within your reach. Simply sit and look and enjoy Memory and facts

it for awhile. Next day put down your memory of it with pen or brush. The picture will be somewhat vague of outline and sadly lacking in detail but it will be sure to have the warmth of the sunshine, the tender grey of the mountains, the fathomless depth of the mottled sky, the infinite flash and sparkle of color and light on rock and leaf and stem because these are the things which will impress you.

Now observe how a young beginner proceeds in painting his picture on the spot. He does not ask himself what he most enjoys in the scene, but only what he sees. The most prominent object may be a fence. In it goes, just the right number of rails and probably the right number of nails. Another fact is a house. In it goes, windows and doors, panes and panels, chimneys and clapboards. Next come the trees and their leaves, each in its proper place; weeds, grasses, ferns, clouds and mountains, everything in its local color.

Everything the eye can see is too important to be neglected.

When it is all finished she may weep over it. If it be he, the palette knife will make an end of it, for with all these facts—these truths of nature—studied on the spot—the thing does not resemble anything but an auctioneer's inventory.

The charm of it all

Without the distraction of the canvas and the matter-of-fact mood, the student would have felt that the facts he understood had nothing to do with the charm of the scene.

The sketch

These two persons, the dreamer and the digger, represent the two divisions of workers into which the world is divided.

The dreamers, the poet painters, the transcendentalists, despise the paint box and sketching easel as insignia of imbecile industry. They go off alone or by twos or threes equipped with nothing more than a pocket notebook and a bundle of cigarettes.

Collecting material

They wander about in the cool of the morning and the dusk of the evening or it may be in the blaze of noon or the tranquil shade of a grey day. A pencil note of color effect here, an outline of a dozen strokes there, a gnarled tree or a picturesque roof, a calf or an old gate.

Saturation

The hour or the day comes when the painter stands in the presence of his inspiration, the thing worth painting. He makes himself comfortable. He sits and smokes and dreams and looks. There he will go every day while sun and weather are right. He sits and dreams and looks until he is steeped in the theme, penetrated through and through. It is forevermore his possession.

Inspiration

Next day the place that knew him so long will miss him. He is painting. He paints with passion. His pulses leap with the creative instinct. His soul is brimming over with the poetry, the music of it, the sweetness, the harmony, the emotion of his theme.

With strong quick strokes the glowing tints are laid side by side.

Realization

With consummate judgment tone and value and texture are fitted and balanced. Fingers, handles, knife or brushes are used as the impulse of the moment directs. His gladness of spirit is as the joy of the gods. It is the day of his inspiration and the best that is in him will appear on his canvas.

Next day when the paint is cold and the original impulse spent, when the glamour of inspiration no longer deceives the eyes the picture may seem to him a grey and lifeless thing but it is the best he has in him.

Is there any need of the contrast? The picture begun in the violet dawn and continued at yellow noon, painted at day by day through changing weather and changing moods of spirit, painted for truth's sake and missing truth altogether through superabundance of material, commenced with a chill and finished with a cramp.

After all, it is only a question of temperament, this selecting of the higher or lower truth, this painting objectively or subjectively, synthetically or analyticaly.

The sketch

A mechanical piano may play with absolute correctness but it has no emotion, no passion. We would prefer a jewsharp if it be only played with feeling.

It is the element of human emotion in a picture which makes it thrill.

Planning the sketch

In sitting down before nature to paint ask yourself "What is it that impresses me and makes this scene worth painting? Is it in the play of light and shadow, in the harmony of tones, grace of line, or is it in the number, shape and construction of its details? How shall I paint it to *impress* others?" These questions may be hard to answer at first but it is not worth while to go on until a correct solution is reached.

The hindrances

Landscape painting must always be largely a question of memory. The glare of excessive light outdoors and the strong reflexes cast on wet paint by trees, sky and earth render it impossible to get the delicate gradations of nature, not to mention the discomfort of dust and flies and wind, sometimes cold and damp, always the changing light and color of nature. The work must of necessity receive more or less of finish indoors. Still the training of the memory to do good work requires long and laborious experiment in the presence of nature. An adequate knowledge of nature is only to be acquired by living with her and questioning her incessantly.

Composition

In choosing what to paint an innate sense of proportion, of picturesqueness and of fitness is the best guide. We find few landscapes ready made. There is always something to be modified, transposed or left out, especially the latter. Sometimes an impressive scene would be better made into several pictures; again the picturesque elements may be selected and everything else left out.

In a sketch perfect liberty is permitted as to fidelity to form and grouping, provided that no law of nature or probability is broken. Ideality should be held of more value than actual portraiture, yet there are occasional compositions found in nature which are perfect—altogether beyond any improvement.

A sketch begun in the morning should not be worked on in the afternoon. The appearance of things changes so much from hour to hour in light, color and atmosphere that it becomes practically a new theme.

Tonal qualities

In the morning while the sun is low, shadows are large and dense, while tones are cool. At noon the sun penetrates everything and relief is destroyed. This is not a good time to paint. In the evening when the sun is low again, things take on form and become paintable, but instead of the grey mist of morning the air is filled with a golden haze.

The sketch

The essential quality of landscape painting is atmosphere. To paint landscape well is to paint mist and dust and cloud shadows in the air, the shimmer of summer heat, the translucent stillness of black frost, the subtle veilings of the grey morning, the smoking spume of the driving storm.

The subject of the picture is of less importance. The scene which stirs your heart today, under the warm glow of some unusual light or cloud effect, you may find meaningless tomorrow.

The spirit of the time

It is the state of the atmosphere which makes or mars the picture. It may have one tree or more, three cows or a dozen, a horse, a mountain, a pig or a wheelbarrow, but if it be not enveloped within a veil of glorified air it is vanity.

Time was when we were instructed that each mass must occupy a certain proportion of space but we have happily forgotten that teaching now. A simple plan of light and shade will be found to bestow a certain breadth of effect and concentration of force which is both strong and pleasing.

Old formulæ

The plan of a love song would scarcely meet the requirements of an anthem; still less would it fit the elaboration of an opera. A picture may be nothing more than a simple sonnet, it may rise to the beauty of a poem or even to the grandeur of an epic.

A composition must have a plan fitting to the dignity of its subject.

Whether we make a third or a fifth of the picture shadow, or even if we dispense with shadow altogether, we are free so long as the story is well told and the eye is gratified. There is no discredit due the song because it is not an epic. We only insist that it shall be a good song.

Evolution of personal manner

Any conventional treatment of chiaroscuro should be regarded only as a temporary expedient. Every young artist will base his method on the work of some master, perhaps many masters in succession. Gradually his own individuality begins to emerge and he adopts a manner of his own.

Every man has his own ideal or personal convention in composition by which he selects his subject or into which he makes his subject fit.

This convention is really the thing by which an artist is known, the personal quality in the picture which declares it to be the work of Brown, Smith or Jones.

It is the special arrangement of line, color, light or mass which for him is the only way to express the force, the delicacy, the beauty, the vividness or the glory which appeals to him as the thing best worth expressing.

A painter of narrow limitations will have a narrow convention. He is like a shore bird repeating forever a single note. It may be a very sweet note, but it is all he has.

In a collection of two hundred pictures by many artists it is rarely that the work of one man can be mistaken for that of another by a connoisseur.

Ten artists sketching the same subject will produce ten totally different conceptions of it. Not one of them but has some characteristic quality, the sign manual of the artist.

The personal sign

In great exhibitions like the Royal Academy or the Salon all the pictures can be grouped into a few sections according to their conventions. It will be found that a few great masters of pronounced originality have developed styles or conventions of their own. Nearly all the rest are more or less frank imitations of these conventions, each painter being led by his personal perceptions to follow one or another, and yet each will have some peculiarity of manner, which, if he be strong and original himself, will some day develop into a style.

A good theoretical knowledge of art may be obtained from books plus a familiarity with good pictures but no critic is able to judge truly of the merits of a picture without a practical experience

Need of practical experience

with paint. What seems easy and a matter of course in the finished work may be in fact a tremendous triumph of skill over difficulties and per contra, the lurid and catchy effect may be the result of some simple commonplace trick of the studio.

The magic of knowing how

A study which seems hopelessly weak can be made to glow and sparkle by means of a few judicious strokes of accent. An edge here, a dot of color there, a point of shadow or a high light elsewhere. It blooms out like the unfolding of a morning glory.

An overworked sketch which has run to mud can be cleared up by a few careful touches of pure color placed just where they will give the local keynote to each mass.

Accent

Too much value cannot be placed on accent. It is the concentration of light or color in small points which give spirit and value and express relief and contrast. Every mass has its accent somewhere.

"Papillonage" is an expressive French term for which there is no English equivalent. Many detached lights and spots of bright color or shadow suggest the restless, flicking movement of a butterfly; hence the name. The result is a certain dislocation of composition which takes it out of the realm of fine art and puts it over on the side of decoration—provided, of course, that it is otherwise good.

The sketch

"Cherchez, cherchez, toujours."

Eyes have been ruined, pecks of them, not to speak of the acres of canvas, by this mischievous, unqualified formula.

Finish

That excessive elaboration of surface called "finish" so dear to the heart of the Philistine and once held in toleration even by some artists has now almost passed out. It is the enemy of so many more important qualities, so inconsistent with spirituality, breadth, grandeur, atmosphere and so on that artists sacrifice it without ruth.

It so happens that these highest qualities are the very ones which are most difficult to understand by the uncultured many, while minute detail is plain to even the lowest intelligence.

This fact is not likely to influence artists to their hurt so long as "art is for art's sake" and the artist's judgment must always be the final word, but beginners may be sometimes bewildered between the applause of the untaught and the dictum of the teacher.

"And when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campaniles, and the warehouses

are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairyland is before us—then the wayfarer hastens home; the working man and the cultured one, the wise man and the one of pleasure, cease to understand as they have ceased to see, and Nature, who, for once, has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone, her son and her master, her son in that he loves her, her master in that he knows her."—Whistler.

The impulse to paint

When the heart is full of the gladness of art the eager hands hasten with impatient desire to impart it to the world, but the most successful effort of the highest inspiration always falls short of the fullness of the message.

The placid perseverance of methodical industry has no more art or inspiration in it than the turning of a grindstone.

Lovely color and graceful outline and clever texture are good things, but we need more, much more for the making of a real picture. When the soul is brimming with an overflowing bounty of beauty, all means are inadequate to express the fullness of its splendor. Man has not yet come to his full heritage, but every new mode of expression is an added language which brings him a little nearer to it.

The sketch

"Industry in art is a necessity, not a virtue—and any evidence of the same, in the production, is a blemish, not a quality."

"The completed task of perseverance only, has never been begun, and will remain unfinished to eternity—a monument of good will and foolishness." —Whistler.

In the painting of a tree, its bulk, its projection in space, its envelope of atmosphere, the grace of its movement, the majesty of its mass—these are the qualities which impress us. All the petty amateurish niggling with leaf and twiglet which delights the great unlearned adds not one iota of value, but may sweep out of existence all the real beauties which make the thing a joy forever.

The great qualities

If the subject be a rose, a cathedral, a human face, or a burro the same principle equally applies. Whoever has seen the exquisite jewel-like cabinet pictures of Diaz or Rico with their rich textures, vivid color, dazzling light and telling composition, has recognized that a broad handling, even on a small scale, is consistent with the expression of all of which paint is capable.

Some good work has been done by the analytic method in which the painting is built up, touch by touch, beginning with the detail and finishing with the glazed shadow but nothng short of genius can accomplish it, and the labor of it is enormous.

The building of a picture

To be modern is to paint synthetically, commencing with masses as if blocking it out in clay, aiming first at the grand qualities, composition, light, color and atmosphere. Detail is added last of all, if at all, and used as accent to the masses.

THE PAINTER

"IF I HAD but six pennies in the world I would use three of them to buy me a loaf of bread and with the other three I would buy a white hyacinth to feed my soul."—Goethe

Beauty the food of the soul

To every spiritually conscious man there comes, sooner or later, to some often, the day of fasting in the desert. It is in his bitter hour of discouragement, under the juniper tree, that art comes to him as the ravens to Elijah, to feed his soul.

The hungering and thirsting for beauty is innate in man. As the starved body shrinks and perishes for want of physical aliment, so does the starved spirit languish and suffer atrophy.

Without the sense of beauty in life (and art is its language) man is but a one-sided creature. Like a one-sided wheel, he goes through life with a limp.

Originality

The gift most valued by artists is originality. It seems every year as if the entire scale of subject and treatment had been exhausted and there remained nothing more but to repeat the best things already done. Once in a while some man will discover a new line of subjects, a new locality of paintable quality, or a new way of looking at an old thing. In each case he becomes the man of the hour and the pattern for a hundred imitators.

The art impulse and the artist's equipment

A hunger for beauty and the faculty for recognizing and reproducing it are the impulses which drive men to paint and carve, and keep them at it if need be through poverty and neglect. Beside these gifts are three essential requirements in the making of a painter. First, his mind must be stored with the necessary facts about nature and the use of materials. In the occupations of ordinary daily life there is so litle occasion for exact knowledge of objects that the sight becomes atrophied by disuse. The painter must see with the keenness of an Indian on the trail. He must be able to recognize and compare masses, outlines, modulations of surface, light and tint. He must learn to see. Lastly, the skilful use of implements and pigments requires the same patient practice as the technique

of the piano or violin. Whether the tool be brush or pencil there is no escape from incessant, long-continued practice with the fingers. They must be trained to execute the will of the mind.

The annual brood

What becomes of the thousands of young artists who yearly graduate out of the art schools into the world of productive activity? It looks as if the profession of painting must inevitably become swamped from over-production.

Countless byways

Not so, however. It is the old story of the fit and few. Good pictures are as saleable as ever they were. Prices are as good as ever they were. But have you noticed the marvelous improvement in wall paper in late years, in ceiling decoration, in color and pattern of fabrics of all kinds, carpets, furniture, stained glass, metal work, everything, in fact, to which ornament or decoration can be applied, not to speak of commercial lithography, newspaper illustration and similar artistic industries?

Of six girls studying art side by side, three will marry, one will color photographs, another will become a designer, and the last a teacher or perhaps a house decorator.

Of six boys graduating together, three will become newspaper illustrators, one a scene painter, another a modeler, still another a lithographer or what

not. Perhaps one of the dozen will stick to the brush through every discouragement and in course of time will blossom out as a successful painter.

The fit and few

Following the line of least resistance the majority prefer the assured salary or the easy berth, dropping out of the line one by one until only the fit survive and the fit are always few.

Specialism

The early career of many eminent painters has been a series of experiments. Everything beautiful seems so well worth painting that it requires both will and courage to follow out a single line of work to its ultimate conquest. It is the specialist who wins, however, whether the limitation be a matter of accident or preference.

Personal temperament will always be a large factor in determining the choice or treatment of any class of subjects.

Subject and temperament

Surely every phase of human passion is a legitimate subject for painting as is every phase of beauty in nature. Sadness and tragedy are quite as acceptable in painting as in the drama.

Undoubtedly it is good for us that we may find hope and inspiration in the painted despair of Hagar prone on the desert sands unwitting of the angel who stands near with deliverance in his hands.

Yet there are some men, notably of the Dutch

school, who find nature always weeping, who see in humanity nothing worth recording but tears, the wretchedness of poverty, the bitterness of disappointment, the horror of death.

Perhaps we need such pictures but the painter whose one note is a note of sadness is the same man who is forever complaining of his rheumatism.

And there are those whose entire artistic output is limited to a single narrow convention. Such a case is like a tune written with but two notes for melody and harmony or like an endless repetition of the chord 5-1, an agreeable and good enough chord —occasionally.

Nay, I have in mind one painter of a single disagreeable note who reminds me of nothing finer than a wheelborrow in need of axle grease.

A joy forever

The work of some other man rests you. Whether he paints a figure or a landscape, a cattle piece or a bag of potatoes his finished work has always that serene completeness which invites to content and repose. "Alabama, here let us rest," it says. Such a picture is a well spring of perennial joy, good for every day's meditation, saints' days and holidays included.

The modern reversion to old types and archaic composition is nothing more than a seeking after sentiment, that strange elusive charm of thrills and shivers which dwells in the half ghostly creations of the early renaissance.

Is it a useless quest? That sentiment is an odor from the mouldy borderland between a dead past and an awakening future. Today we stand in the dawn of a new time, on the threshold of a new era where art and commerce join hands. Art, strange and beautiful as ever, but illumined by the clear light of science in which there is no glamor of mystery.

The painter is no longer a mystic, a recluse, a hermit, an alchemist. He is a plain business man, well skilled in his craft, who works for good dollars and estimates his ability solely by its commercial value. He is keeping up with the procession.

And yet the old spirit of art is not dead, that spirit which, like charity "seeketh not her own, hopeth all things, endureth all things," nor are all men and women yet blind or deaf to its presence. You may find them up and down the quiet ways of life, listening for the faint and far-off echoes which fall on the world-wearied spirit of man like the sound of church bells after war.

So long as human hearts yearn for consolation, so long as human spirits feel the impulse of a diviner life, so long will they find in art a refuge, and seek it as a fountain of life; so long also will be found in the world seers and poets and painters whose chief joy in life is to interpret the sweet spirit of the Master's music.