THE FÉSOLE CLUB PAPERS

by

W. G. Collingwood

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FOREWORD

In March of 1891, at the request of Charlotte Mason, William Gershom Collingwood established an art club called the Fésole Club Papers. Over the next four years a series of twenty-three lessons were published in the *Parents' Review* and worked through by students of all ages. Although the program of work was directed towards students in Form 2 and up, Mr. Collingwood tells us of the work of a student as young as five.

W. G. Collingwood belonged to an intellectually and artistically gifted family. He was the son of William Collingwood, a well-known painter in the Lake District of England. W. G.'s wife, Edith, was also a painter and all three of their daughters were gifted artists. His son R. G. Collingwood was a well-known English philosopher, historian, and archaeologist.

As a young man, Collingwood met John Ruskin at University College in Oxford. He eventually became Ruskin's personal secretary, publishing the first biography of him in 1893. *The Fésole Club Papers* open with Ruskin and Collingwood on one of their sketching excursions in Fiesole, an ancient Etruscan town on the hills overlooking Florence. Here we get

our first introduction to the idea Collingwood carries throughout the papers—the principal role of the artist is "Truth to Nature." Collingwood, Ruskin and Miss Mason all believed that nature reveals truths to those who have eyes to see. They recognized that the act of drawing and painting is not merely about the end product, but also about the new personal skill and powers we gain in the pursuit.

In 1906, with permission from the PNEU, Mr. Collingwood re-published the twenty-three original lessons along with his additional notes on the project. His voice is friendly and direct. His way of talking through the subject's unique delights and challenges is an education in how to see. As you read it you begin to wonder if you have ever seen a lemon or tree the way Mr. Collingwood describes. You feel you must go at once to see for yourself if what he says is true.

Each new lesson teaches you to see nature more clearly. Collingwood says "Art, when rightly directed, is educational, for it trains not only one faculty, but all the faculties together." I hope these papers will be your guidebook in knowing your world better and will offer a unique perspective on sketching for knowledge and delight.

Members of the Fésole Club would submit their work for critique after each lesson. These critiques, offered by Mr. Collingwood in the spirit of an object-lesson, were collected in a portfolio to be sent around to all club members offering insight into the collective

work. I have revived this helpful component on my website, www.bestowingthebrush.com. There, you can find the work of other students who have painted from these very prompts along with commentary from me.

Just like those ancient Etruscans, use what you have on hand to work through these papers. I know you will enjoy laying this foundation in The Art of Seeing, because as Collingwood says, "Nature provides the stones. Art builds the house."

Dallas Nachtigall

Fellow Student of Collingwood &

Founder of Bestowing the Brush

2019

PREFACE

These letters to beginners and amateurs in sketching were written from 1891 onwards, at the request of the Editor of the Parents' Review, in order to form a correspondence-class in connection with the work of the Parents' National Educational Union. The class ran successfully until we had to bring to an end both our series of papers and our Fésole Club, because it was impossible to carry on the class as it was then constituted without the occasional paper, and impossible to write the paper, adapting it to new members, without going back over the old ground and wearying the general reader.

Ten years later the Editor complimented me by proposing a reprint, which appeared in the same magazine. I re-wrote parts and added a little gossip about the working of the scheme, how my pupils managed to follow the directions of their unseen and unknown teacher; and how they failed; and, so far as possible, why they failed. In that way, perhaps, the story of the Club as given in this book (with permission from the editor of the Parents' Review), may have an interest, as attempting an object-lesson in one form of education.

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PART I

FIRST STUDIES FROM NATURE

I

THE LEMON

LATE in the autumn of 1882 we had driven up from Florence in the heat of the day; sketched Fra Angelico's monastery—the "Tuscan artist's" observatory that Milton speaks of, on "the top of Fésole"; with sunlight slanting across its pines and purple summits of Apennine looking in among their stems; and we went down before dusk to see the ancient walls of the town. Just outside the gate, Mr. Ruskin, with whom I was then travelling, showed me how the Cyclopean masonry of the foundations seemed to pass by hardly noticeable degrees into a natural escarpment of living rock, so bedded and jointed that it looked like the handiwork of men. It seemed that the prehistoric builders had fixed upon that natural feature as the opportunity for their citadel, and only sought to complete and continue the natural wall by fitting together such blocks of native limestone as lay at hand, exactly after the pattern of Nature, bed to bed and joint to joint.

That, said Ruskin, began Etruscan architecture, exemplifying for all time the first law of good building—how stones may be well and truly laid. It grew into the wonderful art which Etruria taught to all Italy; by which Rome itself—not in a day—was built; and after many days Florence, too, down in Val d'Arno, with her Baptistery and Duomo and Giotto's Tower, the consummation of architecture. Meanwhile Fæsulæ—Fésole—Fiesole, founded by the mountain giants, Cyclopes and star-gazing Atlas, grew to be the central and sacred home of Etruscan thought and art, giving out their laws to all the western world, as Athens to Greece. Upon this old citadel was reared the house where the painter-saint of mediæval Christianity in a trance saw heaven opened and angels ascending and descending. There, later still, to the beginner of modern science, heaven once more was opened, if it were only through a telescope; no angels there now, but in their place the mystery of eternal law and the power that guides the stars in their courses. And these—the mythic laws of Fors and Fas, the mystic laws of Heaven and Hell, and the scientific laws of the sacred book of Nature; the triune codes of Conduct, and Faith, and Knowledge—indivisible when rightly viewed, and indissoluble—are the presences haunting this city of the mountain, the Laws of Fésole.

Founded upon the living rock, built up out of it line upon line, but repairing its broken places, strengthening its weaker sides, raising its height still higher—that is a Parable to us of another sort of Building, with which we are all concerned—the edification of living temples,

the education of the human spirit. In *this* architecture, too, we must work according to those first laws of Fésole, not vainly hoping to conjure up an Aladdin-palace out of vacancy, nor hastily piling a Babel of far-fetched graces and futile accomplishments, but developing the resources and confirming the powers given; so that, one with another, the lives we have to form may stand together, wisely planned and nobly grouped into a new city, gloriously to be spoken of, whose foundation is in the Holy Mountains.

And for this end there are many means. "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there." You see that this conception of a city of God included the finer arts as necessary to its perfection; poetry and music are named as its glories; there was no need to mention the sculptor's work of chapiter and cherubim, the embroidery of the Vail in blue and purple and crimson. Mere walls, you had thought, and a roof would have been enough; but it was not so.

Art, as a means of education, has not used its privileges and fulfilled its mission. It has been too often employed in the service of vanity, to teach a mere "accomplishment," an idle trick, by which the amusement of an odd half-hour shall be passed off as a colourable imitation of the work of genius and labour. There is no education in that, any more than in teaching dogs to dance and parrots to talk. And yet Art, when rightly directed, is educational, for it trains not only one faculty, but all the faculties together; it trains the hand and the eye, and it trains the head and the heart; it teaches us to see, and to see truly; it teaches us to

think—that, science can do; but it teaches us also to admire and to love; it disciplines the emotions.

With this belief, Ruskin began, in his later years, to re-write his teaching, and to re-arrange it in accordance with those methods which a long experience and study had shown him to be the best and truest. Both because the laws he attempted to lay down were the natural and simple canons of practice, like that earliest Etruscan building, developing the powers which we all have in our possession, in solid and straight-forward progress; and because his method was learnt from those masters whose art centred in Fiesole, he called his book "The Laws of Fésole."

But that book was never finished. Ill-health and other claims on the author's attention made it impossible for him to carry out his plan completely; and yet the spirit of it is sufficiently indicated. These lessons are in no sense a reproduction of Ruskin's programme of exercises; but they are founded on his suggestions and carry out his teaching as it was understood by one of his pupils.

* * * *

We have been talking about the land where, as Mignon's song says, the lemons grow. Since the time when our Anglian forefathers learnt from the masons brought over by St. Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop, 1,200 years ago, all our best lessons in art have come from Italy, and artists, you know, are fond of Italian models. Shall we ask one to sit for us for our first attempt? If we can't

get a Mignon to paint, we can get one of her lemons for a penny. I dare say there is one in the storeroom.

I can find only one, and that is a poor specimen; it is not elegant and elliptical, like most lemons; it is too dumpy and lumpy to be perfect, and the wrinkle at the end farthest from the stalk is grossly exaggerated, so that the tip of it is tilted back like a snub nose, or the cap of liberty. It will hardly do for an example. And yet the founders of Fiesole used the material that came to hand; and, indeed, as this lemon lies on the table, I feel that I maligned it at first. It is not a mere lump; see how it pulls itself together to the place where the stalk has been, and swells away from the little round brown spot in varying surfaces that sometimes seem as though they were going to be flat, and then glide into roundness again, like a crystal whose facets have been almost worn away by ages of washing in a river-bed. And then its splendid lustre, and glow of colour! Decidedly, it is worth painting.

But I can't paint it lying down there on the table. I want it on the level of the eye, and farther away. Some other day we can discuss the reasons why; meanwhile, let us put it on the cabinet at the end of the room, about, or nearly, twelve feet away. You think it is too far off to be seen properly; but look! as it stands there it seems, somehow, rounder than it did before; the bright shine comes out brighter, and the dark side seems fuller and broader, all the texture, the little details you expected to be so troublesome, have disappeared; and we see nothing but a space of yellow—so gradated that you

recognise it for a solid mass. I put a dark-green book behind it against the wall, to relieve it more distinctly. How it glows there like a golden lamp in the green gloom! Decidedly, it is worth painting.

For a start, we don't need an elaborate outfit; say ten two-penny tubes of moist water colours—cobalt blue, Prussian blue, gamboge, pale chrome yellow, orange chrome, yellow ochre, raw sienna, burnt sienna, light red and crimson lake. Later we may want Chinese white, but it is easier to begin water colour in transparent paints. Keep the tubes in any little box. A plate will do best for a palette. A half-crown flat sable brush will serve for most purposes, but get two or three of various sizes, not very small. In drawing papers, the most generally useful is the surface known as N (*i.e.* not rough nor hot-pressed): a 7 by 5-inch block costs 1s. 6d. A Whatman Art Students' Board, 14 by 10 inches costs 2d. and that is better, for it does not cockle when the paint is wet. You can of course have more expensive materials, but I find that many beginners are a little afraid of their fine colour-boxes or think that elaborate tools will work by themselves. Please note from the outset, that paints and brushes are good servants, but bad masters.

I want to dash away with bright yellow and dark green at once, but we must have an outline to guide the colour. At least, the Laws of Fésole say so. Plenty of clever painting is done without preliminary outlining, and to that power we all hope to attain. But if you can knock in these forms accurately with a brush and a blot you don't need lessons in the rudiments of art.

How big is the outline to be? Better make it just the size of the real thing. We want to train our eyes to accuracy, and we don't train them unless we accustom them to accuracy from the first. Some teachers, I know, forbid measuring, and in an examination that is right; but in study, the more carefully you measure at first with compasses, the sooner you will get the power of measuring with the eye. Take the length and breadth of the lemon, and mark them on the paper with dots; and now draw the outline, if you please.

You can't at a single stroke! No more can I, to confess the truth. It seemed that almost any round would do, for this is not an elegant lemon. But here it is a little flattened—not too much; it must be rounder. No, that is too round; more tapered towards the point of its snub nose. No, not so much! Well, with pencil and india-rubber we have done our best, and ask the first comer to criticise. We are told: "I think you have made it too *cornery* here and too fat there, but I am not an artist, and I really don't know." Never mind! you are right, and it shall be altered. Is it correct now? Then we had better fix that line with pen and ink, so that it may never get lost when we rub the pencil away. No matter if it shows when the painting is done; it is far too curious and interesting to lose; it has cost us something, and we love it for that—too well to lose it. And now to draw any other shapes in our picture in the same way.

At last we may paint! Without shading? Certainly. If we were not going to colour, shading would be necessary, but when we have coloured properly we shall find that the shading will be there. It will be wise to begin with

the background and save up the bright yellow for a treat at the last.

To get the colours right at once, we can mix them first, and touch the tint on the edge of a separate slip of the same sort of paper, and hold it up in a good light (so as neither to get a shade nor a shine on it) against the object—not *touching* the object, but at arm's length between the eye and the object in the distance. The dark-green book seems to be imitable with burnt siena and Prussian blue. Dry the slip quickly by the fire, and you see it fades a little when dry; so we must put more strength and warmth into our tint, to allow for the colour's drying colder; and remember this as a convenient rule.

Now lay the same tint over the background, not very wet. Where deeper shadows come, throw in some more colour, dryer; and where the lights come, take them out with a nearly dry brush while the tint is still wet. Do a small piece at a time, stopping at any convenient line, or else the colour will dry before you can get your lights taken out and your darks thrown in; and don't put in the darks with very wet colour, or it will run about into slops.

It looks far too dark, does it not? But that is because of its contrast with the white paper. You know how dark even a clean handkerchief looks in the snow. As we have matched the colour, it is bound to be right; and it looks sloppy and granular, but it will dry into flatness and transparency; or, if not to-day, it will come right another day, after you have had a little more practice.

Now, the colour of the cabinet, which is puzzling; burnt sienna won't do without some blue in it; and then perhaps some crimson, and then perhaps some yellow; we shall get it at last. And finally the lemon itself, for which raw chrome-yellow is not enough; it needs a little orange and gamboge to warm it, and the dark side is a very deep yellow—raw sienna chiefly. If it were a very dull day we should need a little blue, for the less light there is in the sky the more grey is in the shades indoors. But the dark side of that lemon will never be black or brown by daylight.

It seems tedious to match these colours, but the work goes more quickly for it in the end; there is no uncertainty, and muddling, and rubbing out, and getting into despair, and wasting time, thanks to the Laws of Fésole. We have tinted the lemon, taken out its light, thrown in its dark, and the drawing is done; a rather long hour's lesson, but not much more. We will place the picture beside the object and look at them from a distance.

Extremely like! but not exactly like; fainter and mistier, for the tones you matched were the real tones as seen through a dozen feet of atmosphere and suffusing light. Not only the tones, but the colours seem fainter than Nature's. You want to paint them up? more yellow, more green and brown? Very well; try. . . .

You have got your picture darker and deeper in colour, but what has happened? Somehow the sweetness of the colour is gone, its luminousness and the freshness of the first wet work; it is beginning to look what artists

call "heavy." And though it will not seem so violent at a distance, it is getting just a little "coarse"; the refinement and softness of the real tones, harmonised by atmosphere and suffusion, are gone.

But the lemon will keep, and you can make another drawing; careful outline, penned down; matched tints, steadily laid; no retouching; and if that fails, another till you are satisfied.

* * * * *

The rest of the paper gave directions to intending pupils about sending in their work. Thirty-one contributed; the contagion of enthusiasm also fired a little girl of five to produce a creditable orange on a bit of note paper, showing that the subject was not too difficult. So far as there were failures, they came from the "little knowledge" which is the "dangerous thing." Some, having shaded from the cast, worked their lemons into cannon balls with black darks and blazing lights. Others, having heard that rough paper is proper for sketches, used a surface so coarse that their tints were mottled with white specks; or, knowing that outlines ought not to be seen in a marketable picture, shirked the penwork altogether. But the object of the lesson was to make them look for themselves, not painting by recipe; and I was much uplifted by the first month's results.

II

THE BOUGHS OF THE BRANSTOCK

AT their third lesson, usually, beginners in landscape drawing ask "Please show us how to do trees! And though the Fésole Club is not intended for landscape only, the request is sure to come, and may be forestalled in this second lesson. It is a very reasonable request, too, so long as you understand that there is no royal road to doing trees, and that no rule of thumb, nor secret of the brush, is worth having compared with an observant eye and a trained hand.

A tree in summer is a very difficult thing to draw adequately; the best of painters can only tell some of the facts about it. A conventional or symbolic manner of tree-drawing may be learnt with ease; but what is it worth? When you are a skilled painter you may adopt any conventional manner that you find to express your own feeling and satisfy your artistic conscience. But, to begin, you must begin with the simplest facts, taking a few at a time. In the winter half of the year trees are not such hopeless subjects, because they have no twinkling, troublesome leaves upon them; we can study their

boughs in peace, and wait until summer to attack the second half of the problem—the foliage.

It is not for the sake of the anatomy that we should do this; for anatomy, the scientific knowledge of the structure, is not what we are now studying. It is an interesting study, and has its own great value in its own place, but its use to the sketcher has sometimes been over-estimated. As long as an artist is sketching from nature, his business is to draw what he sees—the external appearance and the expression of life and character. You might study a hundred grinning skulls and be less able than ever to catch your friend's smile and glance, which are just what you want, as an artist, to record: not the orbital indices and dental formula, which are affairs of science, not of art. So you may know all about the botany of a tree, its fibrous structure, mechanical stability and so forth, and still care nothing for its own self, its life and character. But there is something about a tree that you should know.

In front of my window there used to be an old oak which in summer was one huge cloud of foliage. Early in the morning, with the sun full on it, you saw a great flat mass of indistinguishable, interwoven colour; shadowless and motionless against an opaline background of hazy fellside; with tender blue coming behind its topmost crown, and its lower boughs faintly relieved in warm light against the deeper azure of the undisturbed lake, beneath the reflected rocks and copsewood of heights beyond. It was a single mass of sweet harmony, with not even the accentuation of

a strong note of light or dark; all in pure modulation of transparent colour—the delicatest *aubade* of a full orchestra playing *pianissimo*. To paint it!—well, it might have been attempted by Turner, almost achieved by Alfred Hunt; but what would a botanist have seen in it or done with it?

And then, as the sun moved round, little shadows crept in among the boughs, and the shaping of the tree began to be visible. Out of the majestic mist of greenery there gradually emerged a solid dome, overarching a great temple as it were—storeys piled on storeys, crypts beneath and chambers above, between thick masses of leafage, interconnected by curious galleries and crooked stairways running along the lesser branches and many-corridored complexities, like a palace of fairyland. Through the midst of it you could just trace the great trunk like the Branstock of the mythic hall of King Volsung, who (says the Saga) "let build a noble hall in such a wise, that a big oak-tree stood therein, and the limbs of the tree blossomed fair out over the roof of the hall, while below stood the trunk within it; and the said trunk did men call Branstock." It was indeed the palace of the birds; for in every room of it the leaf-curtains shadowed happy-tenanted nests; and you could watch the flash of wings going in and out of deep recesses, as parent birds carried the morning meal to their young. You could not draw the glittering and the fluttering and the singing that made the summer morning an enchanted hour; but if you knew how, and loved it well enough, you could have studied out the solid leaf-masses, and suggested the cavernous chambers of the

great oak—but not by help of botany or knowledge of tree-anatomy. It was the poetry, the appearance to an admiring eye, the expression of life and character, that made it a subject for an artist. That is what you have to learn as an "amateur"—a lover of art and nature.

So then, in this preliminary lesson of the leafless oak, we are not to suppose that a study of bare boughs will put us far on the way to painting foliage; but it will teach us some facts about trees which hasty sketchers are apt to overlook, and some principles of drawing, some tricks of fence with brush-point and edge, which will stand us in good stead later on.

First of all, to get the outline of the whole, as seen against the sky; for it *has* an outline as a whole, like the lemon we did last month—that is to say, a limit beyond which the branches do not reach, but touched by them, as if there were a gossamer net, thrown over the tree and drawn deftly round it. The outline need not follow every little indentation between twig and twig; it is to "block out" the main contour, so that we may not find after labouring at the boughs, that our tree is without balance or character. It has been said that the outlines of different species of trees resemble the outlines of their leaves, more or less; and you observe that the birch is, in general shape, broad at the base from its slender stem; the fir, at a distance, is a spike; and the outline of our oak—with many and varying indentations, not angular and spiky, but forming curved bays and swelling promontories—does somewhat resemble an oakleaf.

The next thing is to indicate the position and direction of the stem and boughs, without attempting their thickness yet awhile; the stem, fairly upright and straight, with a little curvature in its upper part; the main boughs, at all angles to the stem. And here you begin to feel that the tree is not a flat thing like a pressed fern, or a seaweed dried upon paper. It is a solid mass; that is, some branches come toward you, and some retreat foreshortened in perspective; though the perspective is such as no mathematical rule can teach nor instrument draw. Even those boughs which stand out to right and left of the stem, and at first seem to be quite without foreshortening, when you come to look at them are found to be full of twist and turn, sometimes advancing and sometimes retiring a little; so that there is nothing that is not in perspective. How are we to give the look of this transparent solidity? If we saw the tree in a fog, the farther branches would be fainter and the nearer ones darker; but this is not in a fog, and there is practically no aërial perspective to help us out. There are parts of the more distant boughs which are quite sharp and distinct, and some of the near branches are so faint, where the light comes on them, that they can hardly be distinguished. The only way is to draw correctly, and trust to honest rightness as the best policy. Get all the main lines into their proper places, neglecting detail, and you will find that, in spite of difficulty, your drawing is beginning to look like a solid tree—a tree that you can *see into.* This is the second thing to be learnt about trees.

The third stage is to give the proper thickness to the main boughs. You observe that the trunk is thickest at the base; and wherever a bough shoots out from it, it must be diminished, as a matter of course, by the substance of that bough. The trunk above the fork, *plus* the bough, equals the trunk below the fork. But it does not look so at first sight; the diminution seems smaller than you might perhaps expect, because the substance of the bough is almost lost in the trunk, as when a little soap-bubble loses itself in a big one: consequently the stem is diminished by only a fraction of the breadth of that bough. This happens everywhere, at every fork, down to the smallest. No compasses can measure and divide the breadth of all your boughs and twigs; it must be done by the eye and the hand; and so many little twigs part from every branch that the diminution goes on from root to top almost imperceptibly, never to be measured or done by rule. But if you understand this principle of tree-architecture you will be on your guard against drawing the stem like a post, or the boughs like a bundle of worms; and, on the other hand, you will not make them diminish too rapidly, by fits and starts, but small by degrees and beautifully less.

Fourth stage. All these boughs, even in the stiffest oak, radiate from the root. You notice that fact much more in an ash or a birch, but we choose an oak for this lesson because it is important to see that this is a law of growth which no trees can really evade. The branches are not like arrows shot into the stem, nor rafters laid against it, even in fir-trees. They start from it like branch railway-lines, along which the sap must run

without turning such awkward corners as would cause stoppage or congestion of traffic. Notice the junction of the main boughs with the oak-trunk, and you will see how cunningly they turn at the last moment and join the main line. The only exception is in the case of the lower boughs of a very old tree, in which the later growths of the huge trunk have overlaid and concealed the original point of junction.

And fifthly, all these boughs are curved. The stem itself is not as straight as a pillar; it leans a little this way, again a little the other way. In the older branches, what with the wreckage of many winters and the stiffening overgrowth of many summers, their first springing leap into life has been sobered down into steady-going strength and stubbornness; but you will not find a straight line. Every inch of bough is curved, more or less; subtly and stiffly in places, but still curved. The very stiffness of the curvature is part of the character of the thing; an oak-bough is nothing like a worm, it does not lie along the ground in floppy, wriggling indecision. Perhaps I do worms a wrong; so let us say, a bit of soft string or knitting-wool, flung loosely on the table—curved, but not in living curvature—undulating, but not in lines of action. Think of what an oak-bough has to do for its living; how it wants to reach light and air. But when it starts from a stem already standing straight up, it must strike out in some other direction and struggle to get away from the interference of the stem and the leaves above it and around it; and at the same time it must resist the temptation to succumb to gravity and sink downwards to the earth; which if it

did, it would lose all. So there are many different forces at work to guide the bough and pull it in different ways, at different times and stages of its growth:—escape from interference on various sides, struggle against the attraction of gravitation, and aspiration to light and air. No wonder it never grows straight; but, energetic thing as it is, it would be a wonder if it ever looked limp.

Now that you have noticed the fact, and the nature of living, springing curvature as contrasted with dead, inert wriggle, you have only to look at your boughs and do your best to give their true lines; and having completed the main branches go on, as time and patience serve, to the more obviously and gracefully curved twigs, putting in as many as you can with care, and not resting satisfied with mere scrabble and fuzziness. This you can do with any leafless tree in wood, park or garden. It need not be a particularly noble or finely grown specimen; it had better not be some rarity which you fancy because of its strangeness, but such a tree as you are sure to find not far away, standing well against the sky or plain background of wall. Keep these points or stages in mind, and try for one at a time—(1) Outline of whole tree, (2) placing and perspective of main boughs, (3) their thickness and tapering, (4) their radiation, (5) their curvature, and (6) the smaller twigs.

Then to paint what you have pencilled, for by now it is likely that your drawing will be rather messy, and you will be glad of the opportunity of fixing the true lines in colour, and then cleaning away the mistakes

with india-rubber or bread. Take a brush with a point to it, and paint your tree, the finer boughs with the point, the broader with the edge. If you are a town-dweller perhaps lampblack will be colour enough; but if you live in the country, and especially if you work on a sunny day, you will find many pretty warm colours in the stem and greater branches, and purple greys in the shadows and across them. It would be wiser not to attempt a background; the tree is troublesome enough in itself. The drawing will not, perhaps, be a very beautiful picture; the value will be in what you learn rather than in what you produce. It is to give you power, to put a weapon in your hands, that I ask you to take all this trouble. Do you remember how the story of the Branstock ended?—how one evening an old man, one-eyed, whom they knew for Father Odin, came and smote his sword to the hilt into the trunk and said, "Whoso draweth this sword from this stock shall have the same as a gift from me, and shall find in good sooth that never bare he better sword in hand than this is."

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In this second month our correspondence class already began to get into difficulties. A quotation from the manuscript criticism sent round with the portfolio of drawings will show what the difficulties were:—

"In writing the article I omitted to consult the clerk of the weather, and entirely failed to foresee that some of the members would be prevented by east winds from working out of doors. I had hoped, however, that most—if

not all—the members would be able to find a window in their own house or in a friend's, from which a tree would be visible; and I am greatly concerned to hear that one 'cannot find a tree within a mile' of her home. A country in which trees do not exist, or are hidden by fog, or are made inaccessible by storm and cold in April, is unfortunately situated for Fine Art. When Ruskin abused the developments of modern civilisation, the destruction of the 'country,' the smoke-fogs and 'storm-wind of the nineteenth century,' he had some reason for his bitterness, after all!"

To avoid this difficulty, in the following year the subject was varied thus:—"Students who cannot see a tree from a window, or find it too cold for out-of-doors sketching, can draw a bough such as may be picked up in any country walk, blown from a tree, or broken—with permission—from a hedge. The bough should be pretty well set with twigs, and not too much battered to look like a miniature tree when planted in the room in a flower pot or in a pile of books. If you happen to find a hazel, and like playing with your work, as most people with imagination do, you might hang a couple of Christmas tree tinsel fruits on the leafless twigs and illustrate the rhyme, 'I had a little nut tree.' But in any case, spread a sheet or a white paper behind the bough, since you cannot possibly follow out the twigs if they come against the furniture, pictures and wall-patterns which crowd the ordinary dwelling-room." There is a way out of most difficulties, and this gave some pretty results.

With the portfolio I sent round some plates from *Modern Painters* to illustrate the subject: "The Aspen," to show how delicately and thoroughly such a leafless tree might be drawn; "Good and Bad Tree-drawing," with some necessary elucidation from the text; and "The Dryad's Toil" and "Young Ivy," to exemplify bough-drawing and springing curvature.