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The Works of John Ruskin

Volume 15: The Elements of Drawing, The Elements of Perspective, and The Laws of Fésole

John Ruskin
Edited by Edward Tyas Cook
and Alexander Wedderburn

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THE WORKS OF JOHN RUSKIN

EDITED BY

E. T. COOK

AND

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN

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1904

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VOLUME XV

THE ELEMENTS OF DRAWING

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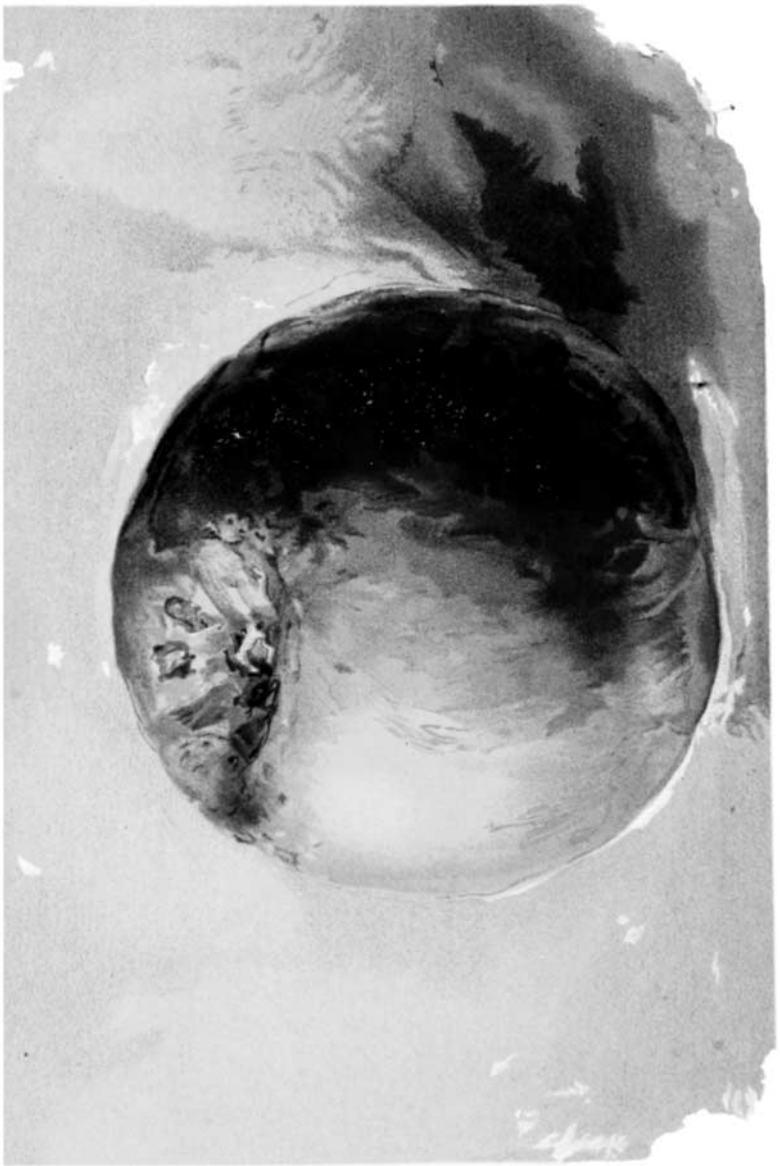
AND

THE LAWS OF FÉSOLE



M'Lagan & Cumming, Edin.r

J. Ruskin

Study of an Apple (Blenheim Orange.)

THE ELEMENTS OF DRAWING

THE ELEMENTS OF PERSPECTIVE

AND

THE LAWS OF FÉSOLE

BY

JOHN RUSKIN

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IN "THE LAWS OF FÉSOLE"

(*Engravings by George Allen from Drawings by the Author*[1])

[1] [With the exception of No. II., which was engraved by Henry Swan, and No. VII., which was engraved by Mr. Allen from a facsimile of Turner's drawing made by Mr. William Ward. In this edition Plates II., III., IV. and IX. have been reproduced by line process; the others are printed from the original steels.]

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IN "THE ELEMENTS OF DRAWING"

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[1] [The above are the pages where the plates themselves will be found. For the author's references to the plates, see also—

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IN "THE LAWS OF FÉSOLE"

FACSIMILE

INTRODUCTION TO VOL. XV

IN this volume we take up the third branch of the work which mainly occupied Ruskin during the years 1856–1860[1]—namely, the teaching of drawing. In connexion with this work he published in 1857 *The Elements of Drawing*, and in 1859 *The Elements of Perspective*. To those two books are added, in this volume, the revised lessons in drawing, which he entitled *The Laws of Fésole*. This book belongs to a much later date (1877–1878), but is here included on account of its topical connexion with the earlier books.

I

The Elements of Drawing originated somewhat in the same manner as *Academy Notes*. We have seen (Vol. XIV. p. xx.) how that series of criticisms upon the exhibitions of the year was undertaken as a kind of "circular letter" in answer to requests for Ruskin's opinion and advice about works of current art. He had from a much earlier date been in the habit of giving drawing lessons by letter, as his *Letters to a College Friend* (1842) show;[2] and after the publication of the first volume of *Modern Painters* he was with increasing frequency asked by readers of his books for advice and assistance with regard to the practice of drawing. Such requests came from all sorts and conditions of men and women, from humble students, otherwise unknown to him, and from great ladies or dear friends. Among workmen who sought his aid in this way was Thomas Dixon, the cork-cutter at Sunderland, to whom he afterwards addressed the letters which form the volume entitled *Time and Tide*. Ruskin was at all times ready to give of his best to those in whom he saw a sincere desire to profit by what he might have to bestow. He had

[1] See Vol. XIII. pp. xvii.–xix.; Vol. XIV. p. xix.

[2] Vol. I. pp. 462–469. See also a long letter, of a similar kind, to Acland, given at pp. 101–104 of J. B. Atlay's *Memoir of Sir Henry Wentworth Acland*, 1903, and reprinted in a later volume of this edition. In this letter, written about 1844, Ruskin remarks: "I know of no book which is a sufficient guide in this study. Most artists learn their rules mechanically, and never trouble themselves about the reason of them."

not always the time to give personal and continuous instruction. In such cases he would put his correspondents in communication with one or other of his assistants—Mr. William Ward or Mr. George Allen—and would himself pay an occasional visit or write a letter of advice and encouragement.[1]

His advice was the more sought when his classes at the Working Men's College began to be talked about. He says of Rossetti, whom he had impressed into the same service, that "he was the only one of our modern painters who taught disciples for love of them."[2] Ruskin's own position in the matter was also unique. He was by this time the acknowledged chief among contemporary writers on art; he was the only critic who had the will — perhaps also the only one who has been competent—to translate his principles into practice, and teach with the pencil and the brush the system which he advocated with the pen. He was appealed to by anxious students and amateurs, as also by official Commissions,[3] as at once a writer and a practical teacher.

It was in order to extend his influence in this direction, and to save his time by printing a "circular letter" to his correspondents, that Ruskin set himself during the winter of 1856–1857 to write *The Elements of Drawing*. The correspondence with a lady, otherwise unknown to him, which is here given in Appendix i. (pp. 489, 490), will show, in one typical instance, the genesis of the book. The publication of it in its turn widened the circle of his pupils. The continued applications which he received for personal advice led to many friendships. At Wallington, where he often stayed with Sir Walter and Pauline, Lady Trevelyan, he gave lessons to Miss Stewart Mackenzie, then about to marry Lord Ashburton.[4] Among other amateurs who set much store by his advice and instructions were Charlotte, Countess Canning, and her sister Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford. "I enclose a nice letter from Lady Waterford," he writes to his father (August 6, 1858); "the sketch of the St. Catherine of which she speaks is one I asked her to do for me of a pet figure of mine at Venice." Ruskin greatly admired the work of both sisters. "I had just got your portfolio back from Clanricarde," writes Lady Stuart de Rothesay (October 5, 1858) to her daughter, Lady Canning, "when Ruskin came

[1] Many details in this connexion will be found in the *Letters to William Ward*, privately issued in 1893 and reprinted in a later volume of this edition.

[2] *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. § 13.

[3] See, for instance, his evidence in Vol. XIII. p. 553.

[4] *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott*, edited by W. Minto, 1892, vol. ii. p. 12.

to visit Somers. I hardly expected him to appreciate your bold flowers, and only showed him a few specimens, but he was in raptures, and said they were the grandest representations of flowers he had ever seen. He said what a *subtle* use of colour you displayed; it was especially so on a sheet with a sort of trumpet-flower or bignonia, in which there are about two inches in the corner of bougainvillia. He thought that uncommon shade quite marvellous, as well as the orange tone of scarlet in the flower, and the poinsettia perfectly dazzling. He had expended his admiration, I suppose, for when Somers showed his own exhibition, he was captious and said, 'You copy nature too closely! It is the place itself! they are *views*, not *pictures*.'"[1] A few days later (November 3, 1858), Lady Stuart de Rothesay adds: "He begs to be allowed to see some more of your flowers, and he mentions having got Lady Waterford's 'Charity Girl' to look at—'She's stunning!' I told Loo this, and she hates the word so much, she would infinitely have preferred abuse."[2] Abuse, Lady Waterford could never have received from Ruskin; but his admiration for her rare talent was tempered with chastening advice. "I am getting on with a fresco," she writes from Ford Castle (March 21, 1864), "which, thanks to Mr. Ruskin's useful critique, I am making of a much warmer colour"; and again (Sept. 22, 1864), "Ruskin condemned (very justly) my frescoes, and has certainly spirited me up to do better."[3] He was a stimulating, if an exacting critic, and he remained on terms of affectionate friendship with Lady Waterford till her death in 1891.

With the general public *The Elements of Drawing* had an immediate success, which has been steadily sustained. For thirty years, indeed, Ruskin allowed the book to remain out of print—for reasons presently to be stated (see below, p. xxvi.); but during the sixteen years of its currency (1857–1861, 1892–1904) it has gone through sixteen thousands[4]—a considerable circulation for a book of the kind to attain. The reasons of its popularity are not far to seek. It was original in method;

[1] *The Story of Two Noble Lives*, by Augustus J. C. Hare, 1893, vol. ii. p. 478.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 479. Ruskin's use of the word "stunning" reflects his intercourse with Dante Rossetti, in whose circle "stunning" and "stunner" were the favourite terms of admiration. In a letter to his mother (July 1, 1855) Rossetti wrote: "An astounding event is to come off to-morrow. The Marchioness of Waterford has expressed a wish to Ruskin to see me paint in water-colour, as she says my method is inscrutable to her. She is herself an excellent artist, and would have been really great, I believe, if not born such a swell and such a stunner" (*Dante Gabriel Rossetti: his Family Letters*, 1895, vol. ii. p. 140).

[3] *The Story of Two Noble Lives*, vol. iii. pp. 251, 254.

[4] See the Bibliographical Note below, pp. 5, 6. The remarks given above are exclusive of the indirect circulation of the book through the incorporation of much of it in Mr. Tyrwhitt's *Our Sketching Club*.

it treated a technical matter with rare simplicity of argument; it illumined details by a constant reference to first principles; and it was written in a peculiarly apt and graceful style. One of the earliest reviews of the book expressed a judgment which successive generations of readers have confirmed: "If all class books were written in the same lucid and harmonious language, and with the same happy combination of the useful and agreeable, as may be found in this fascinating volume, the road to learning would be smoother and more picturesque, and there would be a far greater number of travellers than at present. It is not merely to their intellect and judgment that Mr. Ruskin addresses himself in attempting to convey information to his readers; he appeals also to their fancy and affections. He speaks to them in a gentle and endearing tone, as if he had an earnest desire to serve them; and he gives his advice in language at once so persuasive and so imaginative, that the student is charmed into wisdom."[1] Among the arts which Ruskin here employs, to persuade or interest his readers, is one of which he became increasingly fond—namely, the suggestion of analogies. Sometimes they are introduced incidentally, with little further object perhaps than to give point and piquancy to a sentence or an illustration (as, for instance, at the end of § 42). But more often they are of set purpose, being intended not merely to arrest the reader's attention and stimulate his thought or imagination, but also to connect artistic with moral laws, and to suggest an underlying harmony in the universe (see, for instance, §§ 104, 133, 203, 215). The book is remarkable, too, for its combination of workmanlike attention to detail with the enunciation of great principles (as, for instance, in the discussion of composition). Simple and elementary though it is in some respects, it is yet pre-eminently "a full book." See, for instance, the wealth of instruction given, as it were, by the way, and consigned to a footnote, on pp. 27–28, below. The truth that Ruskin there condenses into the happy phrase—"the innocence of the eye"—lies at the root of the philosophy of drawing, and may thus be called elementary, but it has never been so pointedly and so clearly expressed.

To the student of Ruskin's style *The Elements of Drawing* is of special interest. Those who examine his style in the light of his whole literary production will be struck by nothing more than its admirable flexibility. He wrote about everything, and in all his books, no doubt, there are some characteristics of his genius which may always be traced. But he had as many manners as he had audiences; there were as many notes within his range as there were effects at which to

[1] *The Morning Post*, December 25, 1857.

aim. This is an aspect of Ruskin as a man of letters which is sometimes missed by those who know him perhaps only by one book. An eminent critic has pleaded for "an epoch of a quieter style," and has instanced Ruskin (with Carlyle and Macaulay) among the giants in prose, who have "the rights of giants," but whose splendid excesses are bad examples.[1] But Ruskin, too, had a quiet style. He is a master not only of pomps and diapasons, but also of simplicity and limpid ease. In this simpler style *The Elements of Drawing* is a masterpiece. "The words are now so exact and so illuminous," wrote at the time a critic seldom friendly to the author, "that they fall like lightning to destroy or illumine."[2] Nothing is harder to explain than technicalities of the arts; and nowhere is Ruskin more simple and intelligible.

The simplicity was studied, in the sense that it was carefully attained. The *manuscript* of the book, if anywhere extant, is not known to the editors; but from § 89 onwards the proof-sheets have been available.[3] From § 99 onwards these sheets are double—one set being corrected by Ruskin himself, the other by his old friend and mentor in these matters, W. H. Harrison.[4] An examination of the sheets shows what publishers are apt to consider the greatest of literary vices, and what authors find the costliest of indulgences—namely, a habit of rewriting in proof. The simplicity, of which we have spoken, was attained only by the most careful revision. The rewriting is especially frequent in Lecture iii. A passage of some interest is here supplied from the proof in a note below the text (p. 114). Revisions after the first edition were few and unimportant; they are recorded, as usual, in the Bibliographical Note (pp. 7, 8).

The method of work adopted both in *The Elements of Drawing*, and in Ruskin's classes at the Working Men's College, has often been misunderstood. The book, it should be said, follows in the main the system as taught by the author at the College, with such modifications as the absence of a master rendered desirable (see below, p. 14). The misunderstanding of the system appears very clearly in a criticism of *The*

[1] "On the Study of Literature" in John Morley's *Studies in Literature* (1891).

[2] The *Athenæum*, July 11, 1857.

[3] Most of these are in Mr. Allen's possession: but a few sheets (mostly corrected by Harrison, one by Ruskin) are in that of Mr. Ward. The sheet corrected by Ruskin contains §§ 255–257 ("Things to be Studied"), and shows extensive alterations and additions.

[4] See Vol. I. p. xlviii. Harrison, if conscientious, was somewhat meticulous. The author and his proof-reviser had a stiff fight over the word "by" in § 204 ("interesting by having its main arch," etc.). Harrison stood out for "in." "*By*," he wrote, "is not English; *in* is. But you have," he added sarcastically, "an unfilial hatred of your mother tongue." Ruskin, we must suppose, smiled and passed on, for the word was printed "by."

Elements of Drawing by William Bell Scott, to which Ruskin replied, and which is therefore noted here in an Appendix (see pp. 491–494). Scott was master in the Government School of Design at Newcastle, and afterwards an examiner in the art schools at South Kensington. He was thus closely connected with the system of teaching then followed in the Government schools. This system was regarded by Ruskin as in some respects radically at fault. He considered that it paid too little regard to the forms of natural objects and to delicacy in handling, and, furthermore, that the end which it proposed to itself was erroneous. It confused, he thought, art as applied to manufacture with manufacture itself; it supposed that the art of design could be taught by rule; and thus proposed to give its pupils "such accurate command of mathematical forms as might afterwards enable them to design rapidly and cheaply for manufactures." Ruskin notices this matter briefly in the preface to *The Elements of Drawing* (see below, p. 11), and it was a principal theme in the series of public lectures which he delivered at the time (see the next volume).

Ruskin's class at the Working Men's College and his text-book were, therefore, intended as a practical protest against certain phases and ideas in the current teaching of the time. But they were not intended as a complete substitute for all other methods and agencies. At the College, it should be remembered, Ruskin took only the landscape class, leaving the life class to Rossetti. He neither desired nor attempted to make artists or professional designers. Scott's criticisms fell wide of the mark from a misunderstanding on these points. Scott complained that pupils who studied under Ruskin's system at the Working Men's College did not attain the same facility in designing for the manufacturers that rewarded the students of other systems. The reply is that Ruskin never promised them any such proficiency. "My efforts are directed," he said succinctly to a Royal Commission in 1857, "not to making a carpenter an artist, but to making him happier as a carpenter."[1] This was a distinction which he constantly made in his addresses to the men themselves. Here, for instance, is the recollection of the gist of an address by a visitor to the College:—

> "Now, remember, gentlemen, that I have not been trying to teach you to draw, only to *see*. Two men are walking through Clare Market, one of them comes out at the other end not a bit wiser than when he went in; the other notices a bit of parsley hanging over the

[1] See Vol. XIII. p. 553. See also his evidence to the Public Institutions Committee in an appendix to Vol. XVI.

> edge of a butter-woman's basket, and carries away with him images of beauty which in the course of his daily work he incorporates with it for many a day. I want you to see things like these."[1]

Scott complained, again, that Ruskin's system included no drawing from the antique; that "etching with a pen from lichenous sticks" was not a sufficient education in drawing; and that adherence to Ruskin's exercises never had made an artist, and never would. The reply is that Ruskin never said, or supposed, that it would. "As a matter of fact, he always urged young people intending to study art as a profession to enter the Academy Schools, as Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites did."[2] His object was not to instruct professional artists, but to show how the elements of drawing might best be made a factor in general education. What he claimed for his system was that it was calculated to teach refinement of perception; to train the eye in close observation of natural beauties and the hand in delicacy of manipulation; and thus to make his pupils to understand what masterly work meant, and to recognise it when they saw it.

Ruskin himself, as one of his pupils has related, did not always attach supreme importance to the particular methods which he first adopted. In all teaching the personality and genius of the teacher are of more importance than his method; and this is true both of Ruskin's book and of his oral teaching:—

> "We were not most strongly impressed (writes the pupil in question) by his influence when he was obviously teaching us; and certainly we were least so when he was most theoretic. Indeed, he did not always remain constant to his own methods of teaching, nor to his own theories. Some years ago an amateur student by chance came across *The Elements of Drawing*, and set to work assiduously making little squares of hatched pen-and-ink lines, reducing them as far as possible to the evenness in tone of a square of grey cloth which Mr. Ruskin wished them to resemble. The student also copied outlines and traced the originals and fitted the two together, which is the

[1] From a letter by the Rev. Henry Solly in the *Inquirer*, February 10, 1900. Mr. Solly went to hear Ruskin's address at the close of one of the terms. "At the close of the address," adds Mr. Solly, "a gentleman sitting next me went up with me to the platform to thank Mr. Ruskin not merely for that address, but for the remarkable good he had been conferring year after year on the English-speaking race. . . . I shall never forget the sad and wistful smile that came over his face as he turned a little away saying, 'Oh, do you think so? it seems to me as if I looked back only on a misspent life and wasted opportunities.'"

[2] *The Life and Work of John Ruskin*, by W. G. Collingwood, 1900, p. 154. See in confirmation what Ruskin said to the St. Martin's School of Art in his address of April 15, 1858 (Vol. XVI., Appendix vi. § 2).

second exercise ordained in that book. These exercises were shown to Mr. Ruskin, who was so delighted with them that he wished to teach the student himself. The student painted shells and other objects of still-life for Mr. Ruskin, and Mr. Ruskin painted shells, etc., for the student, saying that not only could he not draw anything that was moving, but likewise nothing that had the power of moving — as it fussed and worried him too much to feel that at any moment it might begin to move.[1] Alluding to these drawing lessons a few years later, he said to his pupil, 'They were all wrong. They were only one side of the matter. *The Elements of Drawing* are not complete, and therefore they are misguiding and wrong.'"[2]

It may be doubted whether Ruskin said that his old exercises were "all wrong"; or, if he did, he spoke with the exaggerated self-depreciation which sometimes marked his conversation. But in saying that *The Elements of Drawing* were "not complete," he said what he would never have denied, and what it is important to remember. The form into which he threw his work and the method adopted in his teaching were in large measure conditioned by circumstances of the time. He desired, in a practical way, to protest against certain tendencies in the current teaching of drawing. He sought to encourage closeness of observation rather than mere facility of hand, and to fix the pupil's attention on natural objects rather than on casts or "nonsense lines."

In these respects his methods have had considerable influence,[3] and

[1] Ruskin makes the same remark of William Hunt (see Vol. XIV. pp. 441, 443). But Ruskin could work quickly, as well as patiently, as the following reminiscence shows: "On boat-race day I was in the room of an old art pupil of Mr. Ruskin's at the Working Men's College in Great Ormond Street. Seeing a very clever sketch of a dead bird in carmine-lake on the wall, I admired it and asked whose it was. 'John Ruskin's,' said my friend. 'You know how he used to come up to our easels, one after the other, and tell us where we were right, with a word of praise, and where wrong, with a "Look here, this is the way to do that!" Well, that bird which you've just admired, Ruskin did one night, on the edge of my drawing-paper, in less than ten minutes, to give me a hint. He dashed the sketch in as fast as brush could go, and the breast, which is so effective, he did by dabbing the inside of his thumb on the wet paint. I wouldn't part with it for anything. A year or two ago he came to see me, and I showed him his sketch and reminded him of when and how he did it. Of course he'd forgotten all about it. But he looked at it, and said smilingly, "Well, it's very well done." And so it is'" (A correspondent—Dr. Furnivall—in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 9, 1887).

[2] "John Ruskin: by a Former Pupil" (*Westminster Gazette*, January 23, 1900). Rossetti, it may be noted, thought highly of Ruskin's methods. "Ruskin's class," he wrote (January 23, 1855), "has progressed astonishingly, and I must try to keep pace with him" (*Letters to William Allingham*, p. 98).

[3] Even the "lichenous stems," which aroused W. B. Scott's contemptuous ire, have been adopted in some official quarters. The Home Office has recently taken over from the old Science and Art Department the teaching of drawing, etc., in the Reformatory and Industrial Schools. The officials responsible for the work do not

another fruitful aspect of *The Elements of Drawing* may be mentioned. Ruskin was "the first to point out the advantages of the *Liber Studiorum* of Turner as the best school of Landscape Art." In the fifth volume of *Modern Painters* he gave his analysis of the human motives in that work; in *The Elements* he first laid down a system of study from those specimens of Turner's genius. During his Professorship at Oxford he constantly recurred to the subject, and impressed upon his pupils the importance of patient study from the *Liber*.[1] Such study is now a recognised part of the "South Kensington" system. Mr. Frank Short, of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers, when a student at the South Kensington Art Schools, had copied some of the plates in the *Liber*, as recommended by Ruskin in *The Elements of Drawing*:—

"Already an accomplished artist and etcher, his progress in acquiring facility in mezzotint-engraving was rapid, and he soon produced successful copies of some of the plates. All this coming to the knowledge of Mr. Ruskin, he was much interested, visited Mr. Short in his studio, and told him that there was 'a great future for landscape mezzotint-engraving, which, in its highest development, had only been foreshadowed by the early men.' He also said to Mr. Short, in his characteristic way, 'Take care of your eyes, and your lungs, and your stomach, and stick to it.'" Mr. Short subsequently engraved, in facsimile, a number of the plates in such a manner as to call forth high praise from Mr. Ruskin, and admiration from every connoisseur of the *Liber*."[2]

The result was that Mr. Short was commissioned by the Science and Art Department to prepare, as a volume in "The South Kensington Drawing-Book," *A Selection from the Liber Studiorum: a*

suppose that they will succeed in turning all their reformed hooligans into artists, but their Syllabus shows that they hope to teach the clumsy-fingered lads what deftness of handling means, and to arouse in them, perhaps, some appreciation of the delicacy of natural forms. Among the drawing-copies is included, by permission of Mr. Allen and of Ruskin's executors, his study of an oak spray ("The Dryad's Toil," Plate 51 in vol. v. of *Modern Painters*). See the *Drawing Syllabus for Guidance in Home Office Schools*, 1903.

[1] See, especially, *Lectures on Art*, § 172, and *Lectures on Landscape*, § 39.

[2] A prospectus of these facsimiles (published by Mr. Dunthorne) was revised by Ruskin, who stated in it that Mr. Short's work had obtained his "unqualified approval." The actual words in the letter cited above (February 10, 1886) are: "Now for goodness' sake take care of your eyes, and lungs, and your stomach, and we will have such lovely times." At a later date Mr. Short sent Ruskin impressions of some of the plates. "Are these lovely things," he replied (February 10, 1887), "really for me to keep? Any one of them would have been a dazzling birthday present to me; but above all gifts, the pleasure of seeing such work done again, and of knowing that the worker is as happy as he is strong in it, lights the spring of the year for me more than the now cloudless sunshine on its golden hills."

Drawing-Book suggested by the writings of Mr. Ruskin.[1] This was published in 1890; "it aims at placing a selection of the most noted of these works, for practical instruction, within the reach of every Art School in the kingdom, and through the medium of the Government system of Art Prizes, within the grasp of any clever young student." Thus after many years has been realised one of the objects which Ruskin had most at heart in writing *The Elements of Drawing*.

Through his friend, Professor Norton, Ruskin was instrumental also, it may be added, in making the *Liber Studiorum* better known in America. In 1874 Professor Norton delivered a series of lectures on Turner's Works, and in the same year the Cambridge University Press (U.S.A.) published a *Catalogue of the Plates of Turner's Liber Studiorum: with an Introduction and Notes.* The text of this volume consists almost entirely of extracts from Ruskin's writings on the subject. In the catalogue which was issued in connexion with Professor Norton's Lectures,[2] an extract from a letter by Ruskin was given which may here be added:—

> "Even those who know most of art may at first look be disappointed with the Liber Studiorum. For the nobleness of these designs is not more in what *is* done than in what *is not* done in them. Every touch in these plates is related to every other, and has no permission of withdrawn, monastic virtue, but is only good in its connexion with the rest, and in that connexion infinitely and inimitably good. The showing how each of these designs is connected by all manner of strange intellectual chords and nerves with the pathos and history of this old English country of ours, and with the history of European mind from earliest mythology down to modern rationalism and irrationalism,—all this was what I meant to try and show in my closing work; but long before that closing I felt it to be impossible."[3]

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[1] The full title of the publication is "The South Kensington Drawing-Book. A Selection from the *Liber Studiorum* of J. M. W. Turner, R.A., for artists, art students, and amateurs. A Drawing-Book suggested by the writings of Mr. Ruskin. With a Historical Introduction by Frederick Wedmore, Practical Notes by Frank Short, and Extracts from the Writings of the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A., and others. Under the sanction of the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education. London: Blackie & Son, Limited, 49 Old Bailey." The passages cited above are from the Editor's Preface (by John Ward, F.S.A.), pp. 3, 4; and see p. 15. The "Swiss Bridge" or "Via Mala" (see below, p. 99 *n.*) is given first—"a pure pen drawing," Ruskin remarked to Mr. Short of Turner's etching (p. 23). Of "The Stork and Aqueduct" Mr. Short says (p. 45): "I believe Mr. Ruskin considers the etching of this plate finer than any other, and so I think it is."

[2] For the title, and for another extract, see Vol. XIII. p. 325.

[3] This extract (p. 6 of the catalogue) was reprinted in *Arrows of the Chace*, 1880, vol. i. p. 141 *n.* See also *Lectures on Landscape*, § 39, where Ruskin quotes

The Elements of Drawing has been widely read in America, and it has also been translated into Italian (see p. 6); thus returning, as we may in a certain sense say, to its country of origin. Ruskin remarks of his system of teaching that, though "at variance with the practice of all recent European academy schools," it was yet founded on that of Da Vinci.[1] "I think," he said in his Inaugural Address as Professor at Oxford, "you need not fear being misled by me if I ask you to do only what Leonardo bids."[2] The similarity of teaching in the *Treatise on Painting* and *The Elements of Drawing* is often very marked. A few references to Leonardo's *Treatise* have, in accordance with Ruskin's appeal to that authority, been cited in footnotes to this edition; many more may be found in the notes added by Signor E. Nicolello to the Italian translation of Ruskin's book.

The Elements of Drawing has also been translated, in an abridged form, into German (see p. 7).

II

The Elements of Perspective followed *The Elements of Drawing* after a space of two years. To the study of theoretical perspective Ruskin attached little importance in art-education;[3] the essential thing was to cultivate in practice precision of observation, and this he sought to inculcate by other exercises.[4] But the theory of perspective was a favourite study of his own; some of his earliest essays were concerned with it.[5] Accordingly he set himself in 1859 to complete his text-book of elementary drawing by a companion volume on the elements of perspective. The book is not, and could not have been, light reading, and no second edition was ever called for. He attained, however, in it a considerable measure of lucidity, and its mastery is certainly not more difficult than that of Euclid. To the author himself it was a holiday task, and was written in part while he was on a visit at Winnington.[6] Pure geometry was always a favourite study with him,[7]

another passage from his letter on the subject. The date of the letter is 1867; "my closing work" is the last volume of *Modern Painters*, where (pt. ix. ch. xi. §§ 28, 29) "the lessons of the Liber Studiorum" are discussed.

[1] *Lectures on Art*, preface to the edition of 1887.

[2] *Ibid.*, § 26; and compare §§ 107, 129, 142, 164.

[3] See below, p. 17.

[4] See also *Lectures on Art*, § 142.

[5] See the papers on "The Convergence of Perpendiculars" in Vol. I. pp. 215–245.

[6] For his visits there, see the Introduction to the volume containing *The Ethics of the Dust*.

[7] See *Præterita*, i. §§ 93, 228.

and in the reduction of the elements of perspective to a series of propositions in Euclid's manner he found congenial recreation.

He was satisfied with his work, and in his Inaugural lectures at Oxford eleven years later, he referred his pupils to the treatise, as carrying the mathematics of perspective as far as is necessary.[1] The book was, however, disfigured, and its utility somewhat lessened, by several mistakes and omissions both in the diagrams and in the references to them. Perhaps W. H. Harrison was here out of his depth, or was unable to render his usual assistance in reading the proofs. Attention was called in reviews of the time to the existence of serious mistakes in the text,[2] but as a second edition was not called for, they passed uncorrected (being slavishly reproduced, by the way, in the unauthorised American reprint). Ruskin, however, went through the book at some later date, and marked numerous corrections in his own copy. This copy has been at the editors' disposal, as well as the original MS. of the book, and Ruskin's corrections have been made—the diagrams being altered where necessary. In this edition, therefore, *The Elements of Perspective* appears for the first time in a correct form.

III

The Elements of Drawing was allowed, as we have seen already, to remain for many years out of print. The last issue in the original form was made in 1861; and it was not thus reprinted till 1892. At the earlier date Ruskin's attention had become diverted from artistic matters and was largely absorbed in economic and social problems. The book was still often asked for, but the author, as was frequently the case, had become dissatisfied in some measure with his work. In particular, he had come to attach much greater importance to outline as the foundation of art-discipline than was allowed to it in his teaching at the Working Men's College or in *The Elements of Drawing*.[3] When he began once more to concentrate his energies on art-teaching, he desired to rewrite *The Elements*, but could not find the time.[4] He accordingly allowed his friend Mr. St. John Tyrwhitt to use the woodcuts and incorporate so much of the text as he pleased in the manual entitled *Our Sketching Club*. It was in

[1] See again *Lectures on Art*, § 142. See also the reference to the book in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vii. ch. ii. § 11.

[2] For instance, in the *Builder*, January 28, 1860.

[3] See *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 59; and compare the note added, by way of correction, in *The Laws of Fésole*, p. 134 *n.*, below.

[4] See below, Appendix ii., p. 492.

the form of a review of this book (1875) that William Bell Scott embodied the attack on Ruskin's system which has been noticed already (above, p. xx.). Presently, however, Ruskin set to work on recasting and rewriting *The Elements of Drawing*—partly in connexion with his teaching as Professor at Oxford, and partly as a branch of the general scheme of teaching which he was designing for an ideal community to be established by the St. George's Guild.[1] An account of these schemes belongs to a later volume of this edition, as also does an explanation of the broken and widely-dispersed nature of Ruskin's activities at that time. But it is necessary to bear both of these factors in mind when reading the new version of *The Elements of Drawing*, which Ruskin entitled *The Laws of Fésole*.

First, then, the book is a fragment. It is described on the title-page as "Volume I.," and no second volume was issued. For the most part, though not entirely, the book as it stands deals with outline; the second volume was intended to deal mainly with colour. To it he had at one time intended to give the title *The Laws of Rivo Alto*[2]— teaching from the Rialto, the centre of old Venice, the laws of Venetian colour, as in the first volume he teaches, from the laws of Fésole, the laws of Etruscan and Florentine draughtsmanship. This scheme was, however, abandoned. His later studies at Venice took another turn, and he wrote, instead, the sketch of Venetian history, as reflected in her art, called *St. Mark's Rest*. Moreover, he decided that in colour, no less than in outline, "the laws of Fésole" were "conclusive."[3] He made a large number of notes for the continuation of *The Laws of Fésole*, but, for the most part, they are fragmentary. A few passages are here printed in Appendix iii. (pp. 495–501).

In another respect the book is incomplete. It was intended to be read and used in connexion with the series of Examples which Ruskin was constantly arranging and rearranging in his Drawing School at Oxford. In order to make these Examples more generally available, he intended to issue, as a companion portfolio to *The Laws of Fésole*, a series of drawing copies as folio plates. Several of these were engraved, and were lettered "Oxford Art School Series."[4] The scheme is referred to in *The Laws of Fésole*, at pp. 346, 369 here. But it was not brought

[1] It will be noticed that Ruskin in lettering the plates for the book described them as "Elementary Drawing" exercises for the "Schools of St. George."

[2] See the *Life and Work of John Ruskin*, by W. G. Collingwood, 1900, p. 323.

[3] See Vol. XIII. p. 525.

[4] In December 1877 the following advertisement appeared in Mr. Allen's List: "There will shortly be issued, in connection with this work, a Folio Series of examples for Drawing copies, being Plates engraved from Drawings by Professor Ruskin and others."