Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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introducing first the mystery of the "cipher," to adopt to some extent the evolutionary method, and to make the principle of the cipher attractive by comparison with the more cumbrous arithmetical system previously in vogue? The latter, indeed, has its own recommendations. In adding 5 and 6, or 5 and 8, we nowadays rightly teach children to split up the 6 and the 8 into 5 + 1; 5 + 3; and so to arrive at the totals of 10 + 1, 10 + 3, to suit our notation; but this is even more easily shown in the Roman method, where V. and VI., or V. and VIII. indicate at a glance the separation of the 5's; while the comparison of the methods of representing the totals as XI., 11; and XIII., 13 respectively will be easy and interesting. This may lead on to showing the superiority of the later method, when larger numbers, such as 13 and 23 have to be dealt with, and enable the young child of modern days to rejoice that he was not born a Roman, and by increase of interest the more easily to surmount this early "pons asinorum."

There is an anecdote of Froebel, the child-lover, leading out a group of children to a hill outside a village; leading them and beguiling them with similar art to that of the Pied Piper of Hamelyn, but with benevolent instead of malicious intent, until with him they found themselves by surprise at the top. The hill difficulty has somehow to be surmounted; when it has been clomb, a wide plateau with many devious paths expands before the eye; and those who have gained the summit for themselves will choose different paths. One will naturally betake himself to fields of literature, or to scientific observation; one will find his natural vent in pursuing the more abstract studies of mathematics or even metaphysics. Once the hill is clomb, each to his taste; but what the teacher has to do is to make the ascent as little difficult as possible, to ease the slope. Of all the methods that may be adopted for this purpose none seems to be more hopeful than that which is indicated in the paragraph above referred to. Not merely to coordinate the subjects of instruction, but to introduce them and to carry on the instruction in them unartificially, unabruptly, weaving them one into another and drawing them out in a natural way from the surroundings of the children, thus incidentally combining "naturkünde" and the reasoning and reflective powers of mind. This surely is the method of the future; in it lies the secret of wholesome, tearless instruction.

THE FÉSOLE CLUB PAPERS.

By W. G. Collingwood.

[These twenty-four letters to beginners and amateurs in sketching were written from 1891 onwards, at the command of the Editor, in order to form a correspondence-class in connection with the work of the *Parents' Review*. The class ran successfully until, as the last article said, 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.

The Editor has now complimented me by proposing a reprint. It is not intended to start the club afresh, but perhaps the articles may be of some use, especially as I hope to add a little gossip about the working of the scheme, and tell how my pupils managed to follow the directions of their unseen and unknown teacher, and when they failed, and, so far as I can, why they failed. In that way, perhaps, the new series may have a new interest, being to some extent an object-lesson in one form of education.]

I.—WO DIE CITRONEN BLÜH'N.

Late in the autumn of 1882 I was travelling with Mr. Ruskin in Italy. 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, my guide, philosopher and friend showed me a strange thing: 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 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 my teacher, 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 that haunt this city of the mountain—the Laws of Fésole.

Founded upon the living rock, built up out of it line upon line, after the primal ordinance of Nature, 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 which the Creator has 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, which we do not well to neglect. "As well the singers as the players on

instruments shall be there." You see that this inspired 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.

In 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 straightforward progress; and because his method was learnt from those Italian 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 for our guidance, if we choose it as a guide, in the learning of this art as a means—not of accomplishment—but of education.

We have been talking about the land where, as Mignon's song says, the lemons grow. All our best lessons on painting come from Italy, and artists, you know, are fond of Italian models. Shall we ask one to sit for us for our first attempt? Some teachers would bid you begin with the "Marmorbilden,"

and keep you a year at the antique; but we may as well study Nature from the first, and 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 store-room. . . .

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. A plate will do for a palette. A half-crown flat sable brush will serve for most

purposes. 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 1*s.* 6*d.*

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 indiarubber 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 sienna 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 "vulgar"; the refinement and softness of the real tones, harmonised by atmosphere and suffusion, are gone. If you were always to see you picture at the distance of its objects it would be right, but as it stands it is spoiled.

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.

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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 marketable pictures, 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.