

# The Art Crusade

AN ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN  
DRAWING MANUALS, 1820-1860



*Seated woman with pencil and drawing pad by John Gadsby Chapman,  
The American Drawing Book (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION)*

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*by Peter C. Marzio*



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## Abstract

Marzio, Peter C. *The Art Crusade: An Analysis of American Drawing Manuals, 1820–1860*. *Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology*, number 34, 94 pages, 47 figures, 1976.—Between 1820 and 1860 approximately 145 popular drawing manuals were published in the United States. Authored by painters, printers, and educators the drawing books were aimed at the general public. Based on the democratic ideal that “anyone who can learn to write can learn to draw,” the manuals followed a highly structured system of drawing based on the theory that lines were the essence of form. The aesthetic system of Sir Joshua Reynolds often served as the principal artistic guideline, while the pedagogy of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi was used as a tool for making “drawing” part of a general approach to education.

Although the American drawing books are often seen as part of the general social effort to democratize art, their appeal went beyond art students to engineers, scientists, and illustrators. Drawing was considered a general skill, such as writing, which could be applied to numerous aspects of life.

The leaders of the amorphous art crusade were John Rubens Smith, John Gadsby Chapman, and Rembrandt Peale. Each was considered a fine painter and draughtsman, classical in approach and somewhat out of step with the advanced aesthetic movements of the pre-Civil War years. Their efforts formed a loose but intelligible approach to art promotion. But by 1860 their crusade disintegrated: new drawing theories popularized by the English writer, John Ruskin, placed shading and mass above line in the definition of form; specialization in art, in science, in education, and in mechanical drawing warred against the general approach of the art crusade; new theories of child development emphasized more subtle and open methods of learning that countered the rigid, formula approach of the drawing books; and finally, the common school movement of the post-1860 period failed to incorporate the system envisioned by Smith, Peale, and Chapman into the general curriculum.

The drawing books remain important social and artistic documents. They carried a body of ideas about art and its place in American society that guided the work of numerous painters, educators, and promoters of high culture. They touch many present-day disciplines from the history of art to the history of science.

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From September 1968 to September 1969 the research and some of the writing for this monograph were done while I was a predoctoral fellow at the Smithsonian Institution. Thanks to Mrs. Anne C. Golovin, then an assistant curator in the division of the Growth of the United States, my research was aided in innumerable ways. Miss Anne Marie Serio, Miss Nancy Wyeth, and Mr. Peter Welsh, all of the Growth of the United States, also gave generously of their time and expertise.

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Numerous institutions responded enthusiastically to my letters and personal visits. A few to whom I am indebted are: The Henry Francis Dupont Winterthur Museum, particularly Dr. Frank Sommer and the staff of the first-class Joseph Downs Manuscript and Microfilm Library; the Library of Congress, where the recently retired Milton Kaplan went far beyond the call of duty to help me in my searches; and the library of the National Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, where Mr. Charles Berger responded cordially to all my requests for books from distant institutions.

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Ruth Boorstin applied her red pencil to an earlier draft and made a number of helpful observations. Also encouraging was the reading provided by Mr. Sinclair Hitchings, keeper of prints of the Boston Public Library. His enthusiasm for and knowledge of nineteenth-century American prints simply bolstered my feeling that a monograph of this type does have a place in present-day writing. Finally Dr. Brooke Hindle, director of the National Museum of History and Technology, read the final form of *The Art Crusade* and encouraged me to publish it.

In any work that is written from primary sources and in an academic field which lacks a traditional form, one person often seems to be the guide. In my case, that person is Dr. Daniel J. Boorstin. First as professor of history at the University of Chicago, then as director of the National Museum of History and Technology, and now as a senior historian of the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. Boorstin urged me to combine my interests in fine art, printing technology, and social history. He advised, criticized, and then prodded me on to make this work as clear and as concise as possible. His faith in ideas as the goal of scholarship, his insistence on historical detail as the basis for those ideas, and his willingness to explore the gray, untouched areas of history have influenced my work beyond calculation. This monograph is but a faint indication of his contribution.

Naturally, the final decisions in *The Art Crusade* are mine alone. Any overstatements, research errors, or omissions are the result of my oversight and in no way reflect the generosity of those good people cited above.

## Primers for a Democratic Art

American artists of the nineteenth century were charged with the duties of promoting nationalism, democracy, universal beauty, Protestantism, mass education, and a host of other causes which seemed to smother the simple pleasure of creating art for its own sake. A dominant theme in the social rhetoric was the demand for a democratic art. The first historian of American art, William Dunlap, wrote in 1834 that the artist of America, whether native- or foreign-born, “learns to estimate worth by talent and virtue alone, and not by fortune or descent; and to see that the democratic system is not that which European sophists represent, a leveling by bringing down the few, but an equalizing, by lifting up the many.”<sup>1</sup>

“Lifting up the many” was both a mission and a burden. For some artists, the phrase was nothing but words; to others, particularly those who worked before the Civil War, it was meaningful and demanding. By the time of the Civil War, major cities as far west as Cincinnati and as far south as New Orleans boasted of their “art galleries,” art unions, and grand private collections. Nearly every city called itself the “Athens of America.”<sup>2</sup>

Both artists and critics agreed: America needed a new, democratic art form to meet the realities of its democratic social system. Cheap prints of old masters, giant panoramas, photographic-like landscapes, and genre scenes from American life all promised to capture the public eye. Each had its day and then passed from view, a majority failing to produce new works of art which would glorify the New World democracy.

Of the numerous efforts to bring art to the people during the nineteenth century, this monograph is concerned primarily with the drawing manuals that first appeared in appreciable numbers in the 1820s and continued to grow in volume throughout the

nineteenth century. Between 1820 and 1860, for example, more than 145 drawing books were published. They could not compete in sales with the heart-thumping novels of the period, but they sold in numbers that were large. Benjamin Coe’s *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing* (1840) and John Gadsby Chapman’s *The American Drawing Book* (1847) were advertised in newspapers throughout America. Rembrandt Peale’s enormously successful *Graphics* (1834) went through at least 19 printings, but that was a phenomenon. While popular novels like *Ruth Hall* (1855) circulated 50,000 copies in eight months some drawing books sold a total of 500 copies. We do not know the exact number of manuals sold during the years 1820–1860, but it is apparent that they were available to almost anyone. Using the estimated figures of 145 titles, 500 copies per edition, and two editions for each title, we can assume that not less than 145,000 copies of drawing manuals circulated between 1820 and 1860. Of all these, only a fraction have survived. Today, they are high-priced collectors’ items. Because they are now so scarce, books which cost 25 cents in 1845 run to \$80.00 or \$100.00 today. These current prices indicate their scarcity. And this scarcity suggests that people actually used them. The blank pages in those books that remain show budding artists seeking to perfect their skills.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to being the first group of popular manuals published in America,<sup>4</sup> those of the 1820–1860 era are important because they were written by working artists who agreed with one another, almost word for word, on the meaning of art and the methods for creating it. The authors wrote with fervor, in the tradition of the nineteenth-century reform movements. They were art crusaders who dedicated a good deal of their energies to disseminating a knowledge of art among the American people.

The leading crusaders were three professional artists: John Rubens Smith (1775–1849), Rembrandt Peale (1778–1860), and John Gadsby Chapman

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(1808–1889). Their manuals were based upon a complete system of instruction—progressing from simple lines, to geometrical figures, to household objects, to exercises in perspective, to landscapes, and, finally, to the human form. Other books were more specialized. On landscape drawing, for example, no fewer than 50 manuals were published between 1820 and 1860; there were at least 20 works dealing with perspective, and 5 showing the “secrets” of drawing the human form. Others were more utilitarian, concerned primarily with “geometrical drawing for the use of Mechanics,” teaching how to draw “plans, sections, elevations, and details of Buildings and Machinery”<sup>5</sup> (Figure 1).

The quality and appearances of the drawing manuals varied greatly. John Gadsby Chapman’s *The American Drawing Book* was regarded by reviewers as the most beautiful and elegant manual published in the United States. Measuring 11¼ inches × 9½ inches, the binding and corners were covered with fine leather, and the thick cardboard covers were decorated with marbled paper. The 304 pages of text, lavishly illustrated with wood engravings, and the 15 full-page copper engravings made the book a work of art. Chapman included drawings by American masters like John Wesley Jarvis, Horatio Greenough, and Washington Allston. From Europe he included drawings by Nicholas Berghem, Salvator Rosa, L. Deghouy, James Callot, Antonio Caracci, Rembrandt, and, of course, Raphael (Figures 2–7). There were few rivals to Chapman’s manual.

John Rubens Smith’s *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure* (1831) measured 17 inches × 11 inches and cost around \$10.00. It was bound in cloth and illustrated with lithographs. *Lucas’ Progressive Drawing Book* (1827–1828) by John H. B. Latrobe (eldest son of the noted architect, Benjamin Latrobe) rivaled both Smith and Chapman for the beauty of its illustrations. It measured 9¼ inches × 14¼ inches and was bound with heavy boards and a leather spine. Fifteen expensive aquatints (10 of which were hand-colored), 15 full-page soft-ground etchings, and 6 line engravings—all done on special watermarked paper—brought the work to a cost of \$12.00.

Other large works included J. T. Bowen’s *The United States Drawing Book* (1839) and Thomas Edwards’ *Juvenile Drawing Book* (1844). Both were portfolio size and illustrated with lithographs, but

each contained fewer pages of instruction than either of the books by Smith or Chapman.

While these elegant drawing books received much of the applause, most of the manuals were small, thin, and unpretentious. Rembrandt Peale’s *Graphics* (in its original form) was only 7½ inches × 5 inches and was available for less than \$1.00. *The New Progressive Drawing Book* (ca. 1844), by an anonymous author, was priced at 12½ cents, while a fair number were available for only 25 cents. The blurb for Josiah Holbrook’s *Primary Drawing Book* insisted that it was “good enough for the best and cheap enough for the poorest.” Many manuals were published in paperback editions, and virtually every one was illustrated with black-and-white lithographs. The lithographs appeared on separate plates and were placed either at the end of the text or alternated with pages of short instructions. Joseph Rope’s *Linear Perspective* (1849) contained 32 pages, while William J. Whitaker’s *A Progressive Course in Inventive Drawing* (1851) had only 23 pages in the paperback edition, and Mrs. Anne Hill’s *Progressive Lessons in Painting Flowers and Fruit* (1845) consisted of nothing more than 6 hand-colored lithographs. Few manuals exceeded 100 pages, but some grew with each new edition. Peale’s *Graphics* first contained 96 pages but it was revised and enlarged in 1845, and by 1854 it included 132 pages of text and 41 full-page lithographs.<sup>6</sup>

Packets of “drawing cards” also appeared during this period. They contained as many as 24 lithographs, arranged in order of difficulty. The sizes varied, but most resembled Benjamin F. Nutting’s *Pioneer Drawing Cards* (1856), which measured 4¾ inches × 6½ inches. A set of 24 pictures usually cost 25 cents and few exceeded \$1.00. It appears that the cards were taken less seriously than the drawing books because often they came without rules or instructions and did not receive the approval of all art crusaders. *The Literary World*, which promoted Chapman’s drawing book, noted that some teachers “set before their pupil . . . a lithographic print, and say to him, ‘This is an imitation of Nature; by copying such as these, and observing how I hold the pencil and produce certain lines, you will learn to imitate Nature yourself.’ What a fallacy is this.” The cards were popular, however, in the common schools where a teacher could require students to copy them.<sup>7</sup>

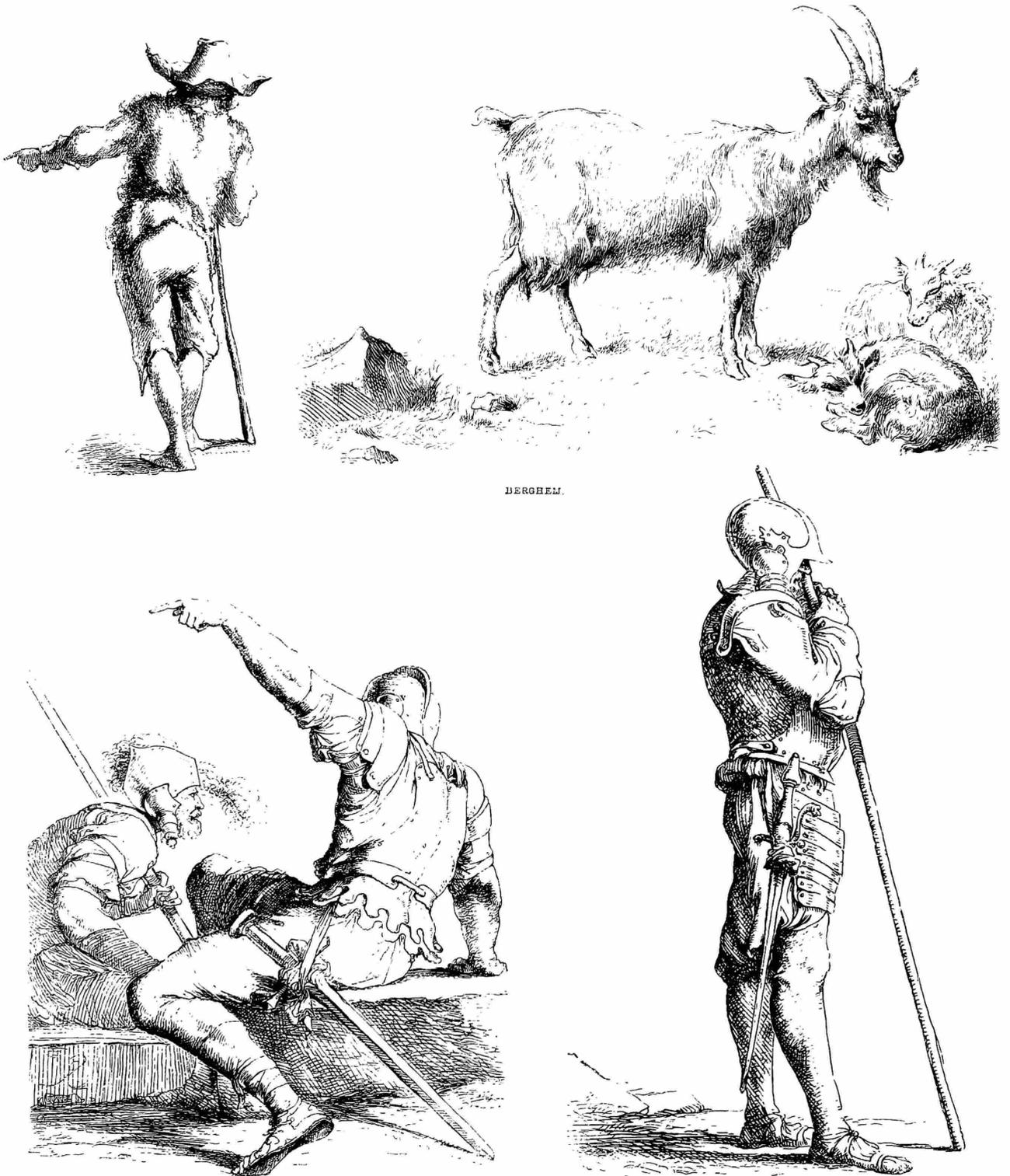
Between 1820 and 1860, the manuals taught a



FIGURE 2.—Sketches by John Wesley Jarvis and Horatio Greenough in John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).



FIGURE 3.—Sketch from nature by Washington Allston in John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).



BERGHEM.

FIGURE 4.—Sketches from nature by Nicholas Berghem and Salvator Rosa in John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).



L. DEGHOUY

Callot 1801

Callot

FIGURE 5.—Sketches by L. Deghouy and James Callot in John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

common system of drawing. Unlike the works of Winckelmann or Mengs, or Hegel or Kant, these books were not theoretical or philosophical treatises but concise statements of practical instruction. Their larger message was simple: by attempting to draw, a man could begin to perceive the meaning of great art and the beauty of nature.

Optimism prevailed. The drawing manuals assured the student that diligence could take the place of talent. Although most authors admitted that great artists possessed inborn genius, still they continually repeated the words of Sir Joshua Reynolds that "nothing is denied to well-directed industry." Emblazoned in dark, bold capitals on the title page of Rembrandt Peale's *Graphics* was the plea: "TRY."<sup>8</sup> He and other apostles of the "self-help" philosophy insisted that "every one who can learn to *write* is capable of learning to *draw*." The art crusaders repeated these sentiments so often that newspapers caught the democratic spirit. In reviewing W. B. Shattuck's *Columbian Drawing Book* the Cincinnati *Herald* concluded that "scarcely anyone is so destitute of taste, perception, and power of execution, as not to be able, with practice, to become proficient in drawing."<sup>9</sup> John Gadsby Chapman went so far as to suggest that many Americans unknowingly resembled Giotto. The great Italian painter had once been a poor shepherd. It was while tending his sheep "by drawing his flock in the sand and on flat stones" that he developed the talent that made him famous. Perhaps, Chapman urged, the American Giotto was, even then, tilling a field or whitewashing a fence. Such a hidden prodigy could develop his talents only by "trying" Chapman's rules for proper drawing.<sup>10</sup>

It was not enough, however, for the authors to publish simple rules of drawing. They felt obliged to justify the fine arts and to counter the continual charges of immorality, effeminacy, and frivolity.

Nudity was one cause for America's disquietude with art. The public fear of the representations of the nude was a very real problem in nineteenth-century America. Although enterprising sculptors,

like Hiram Powers in the 1840s and 1850s, convinced Americans that when presented in glistening white marble, the undraped human form was somehow made holy, most artists avoided the subject whenever possible.<sup>11</sup> The insistence in the drawing manuals upon precision meant that the nude form would have to be depicted in all its specificity. This specificity—which was neither entombed in marble forms nor protected by allusions to historical or

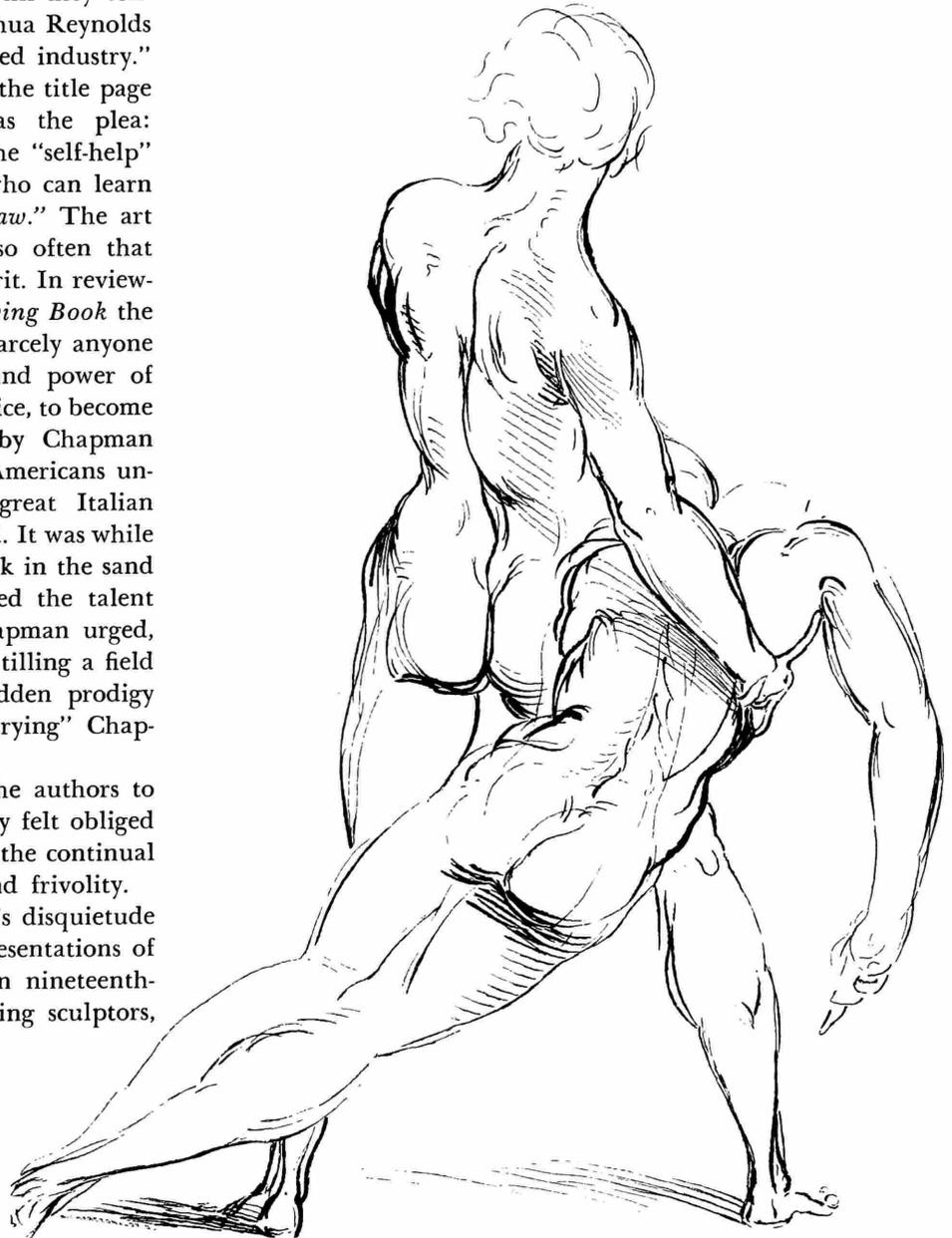


FIGURE 6.—Sketch from nature by Raphael in John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).



FIGURE 7.—Sketches by Antonio Caracci and Rembrandt in John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

philosophical precedents—was bound to stir up trouble. Knowing this, some authors like the artist-educator Benjamin Coe simply avoided any illustrations of the human form; others like John Gadsby Chapman divested their models of emotion and arranged the drapery with discretion.<sup>12</sup> Only a resolute John Rubens Smith refused to genuflect before the popular idol, Prudery (Figures 8 and 9). The male and female trunks in *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure* were drawn unblushingly—his early training at the Royal Academy in London called for a thorough knowledge of human anatomy. Smith warned his readers in 1831, “tis in the mind of the observer all the evil lies.” He insisted that his intentions were pure and that it was “impossible to draw a figure anyways clothed without understanding its construction, and equally impossible to draw . . . without a knowledge of the skeleton, both in its proportions, and in the shape and articulation of the joints.<sup>13</sup> From the Renaissance to the present day, the nude has inspired some of the world’s greatest art. At the time of the art crusade, the human form shared top billing in Europe with landscape art and contemporary history-paintings, and it was unquestionably the premier academic exercise and the real proof of drawing skill. The ideal nude was a chief link between the aesthetic standards of the first half of the nineteenth century and the classic works of ancient Athens, but it was a link which most Americans were willing to break. Thus, the nude played a minor role in the early attempts to teach drawing in America.

This prejudice was only one of several obstacles to the promotion of fine art. The “practical” side of the American character led many citizens to view drawing as a frivolous pastime, fit solely for women and children. In the words of one reformer, few men considered drawing “so necessary that everyone should endeavor to understand it to some degree.”<sup>14</sup> Sigismund Schuster, a German painter and lithographer who arrived in America around 1851, admonished the men of America for their disdain of drawing. In his *Practical Drawing Book*, published in New York in 1853, he noted that in Europe, where even mechanics and farmers learned to draw, they found it an indispensable aid to their daily toil.<sup>15</sup> While most drawing manuals appealed to both sexes of all ages, some, like Maria Turner’s *The Young Ladies’ Assistant in Drawing and Paint-*

*ing* (1833), were addressed to women. In fact, several authors bemoaned the fact that women were becoming the keepers of American culture. William Minifie, an art crusader from Baltimore, noted in 1852 that too many people viewed drawing only as “suitable for young ladies to illustrate their album or some other genteel trifle, but not applicable to any other useful purpose.”<sup>16</sup>

If the rhetoric (and Minifie’s is one of numerous examples) occasionally soared to unwarranted heights, it nevertheless revealed a fundamental, popular bias. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, Americans began accepting the heretical notion that women as well as men needed training in various “mental disciplines.” Private schools for women offered reading, grammar, arithmetic, composition, writing, geography, and even a little French. But in their catalogs and newspaper advertisements, these institutions assured all parents that traditional “ornamental studies” were not forsaken. In 1795 a classic notice was placed in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* by James Cox of Philadelphia:

His employers may . . . expect that his pupils, with proper application, will make rapid progress in Drawing and Painting upon satin, Tiffany, Glass and Paper; shading with Indian ink, Hair Work, and Italian chalks—Crayon Painting and Painting with body colours. Ornamental Drawing, in the Festoon, Bordure, Attribute and Arbesque style.

Throughout the nineteenth century the female seminaries specialized in this polite form of education, even though as early as the 1830s they began receiving healthy doses of strong criticism.<sup>17</sup> John Rubens Smith sounded an alarm by denouncing the superficiality and ignorance of the “fashionable boarding schools . . . that . . . violate or rather abrogate the grammar of our art.” He feared that the “cultured” graduates of these “fancy” schools would become the dictators of American taste, the style-setters in American art.<sup>18</sup> His vehemence and the somewhat calmer protests of others were not directed against women learning how to draw, but against the idea that only women of rich families should pursue the arts. In fact, John Gadsby Chapman emphasized that if women of all classes carried a knowledge of drawing to their looms and to their handicrafts they would make articles “of taste and fancy.” In addition, as a homemaker, a woman who knew the art of drawing would have a healthy influence on her children—an influence, said Chapman, that “will extend throughout her life, and

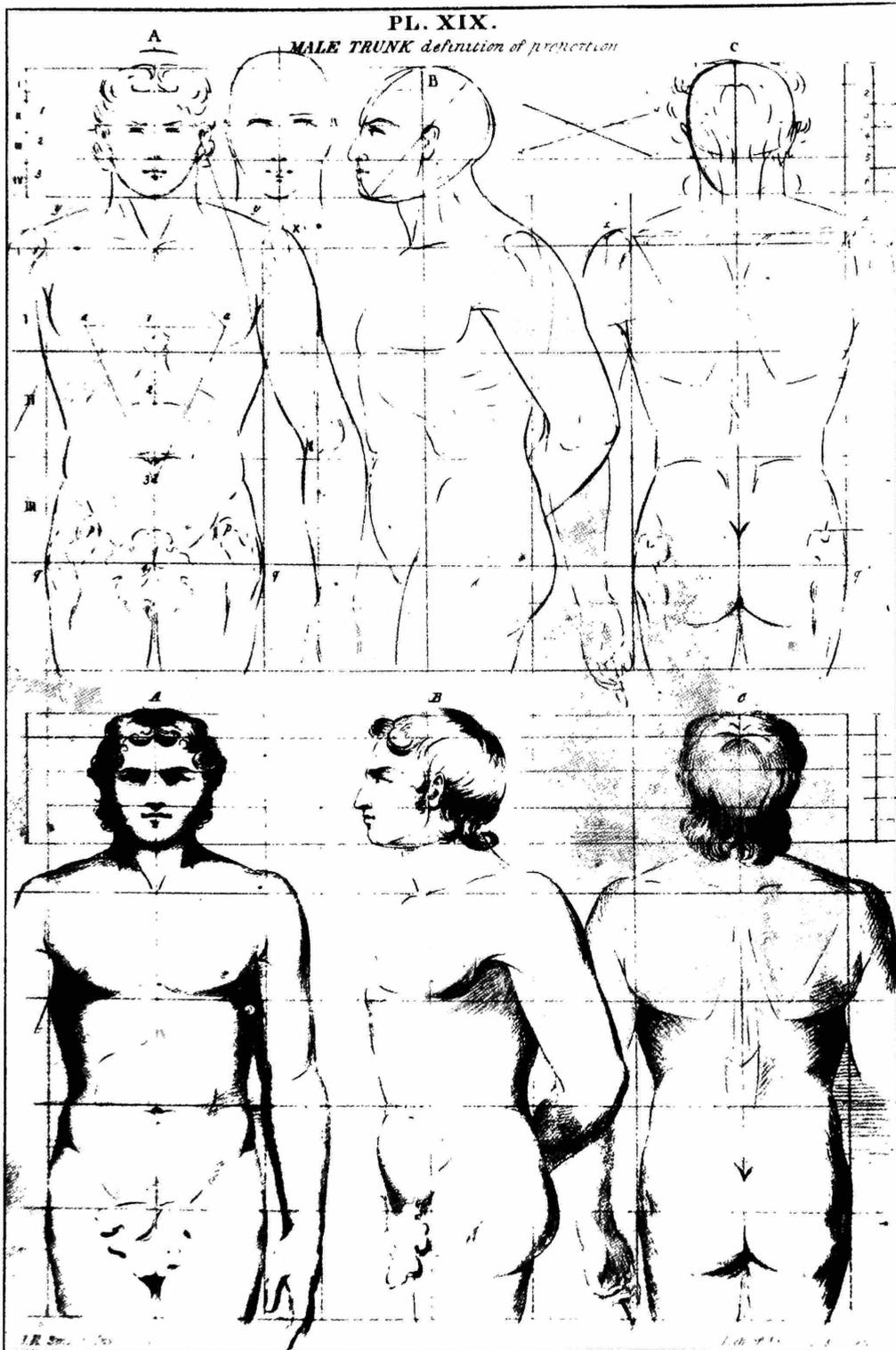


FIGURE 8.—“Male Trunk: Definition of Proportion” by John Rubens Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, plate XIX (NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY).

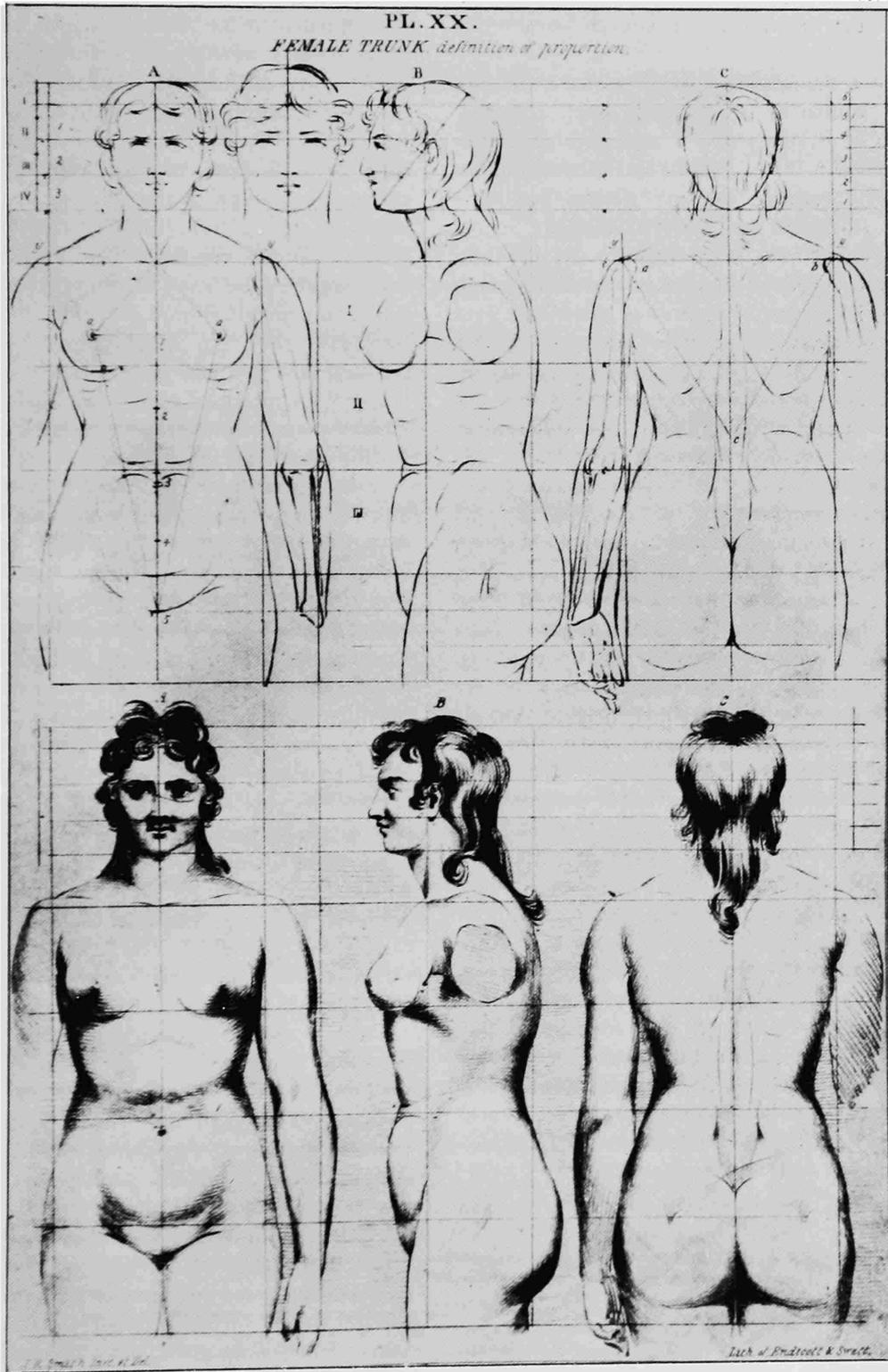


FIGURE 9.—“Female Trunk: Definition of Proportion” by John Rubens Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, plate XX (NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY).

spread a charm about her, which will be seen and felt in all her associations, whatever be her destiny." 19

Chapman's democratic appeal to women of the loom and women of the home to learn a "solid" knowledge of drawing was a radical idea for an American of the 1850s. Few formal institutions believed that "working women" needed art. One significant exception was the Philadelphia School of Design, which was controlled by the Franklin Institute and chartered in 1853 to educate "women who, from the reverse of fortune or otherwise, were under the necessity of supporting themselves." The curriculum focused on wood carving, drawing, industrial design, and lithography. The theory behind these courses was simple: art not only refined the mind but it made anyone a more valuable, efficient worker.<sup>20</sup>

The broad implications of the Philadelphia School of Design were echoed by authors William H. Whittaker, Sigismund Schuster, William Minifie, and others, who insisted that a knowledge of drawing would help the whole economy prosper. They argued that American products such as clothing, house furnishings, and industrial machines were inferior to those of European competitors largely because the artisans and mechanics in America were not trained in the principles of good design. Their work, therefore, showed an eclectic gathering of "anti-American tastes and caprices." They were paste-and-scissors craftsmen, working without a knowledge of pure forms. Only when these workers learned the principles of good taste could their products compete in the world market.<sup>21</sup> William Minifie, an engineer who was a drawing master in the common schools of Baltimore, made art a clear matter of dollars and cents. He was alarmed that in 1852 Americans imported textiles to the value of \$36 million from Great Britain, and \$11 million from France. With a proper "knowledge of art," wrote Minifie, America could correct this unfavorable balance of trade.<sup>22</sup> Chapman concurred:

[Drawing] gives strength to the arm of the mechanic, and taste and skill to the producer, not only of the embellishments, but actual necessities of life. From the anvil of the smith and the workbench of the joiner, to the manufacturer of the most costly productions of ornamental art, it is ever at hand with its powerful aid, in strengthening invention and execution, and qualifying the mind and hand to design and produce whatever the wants or tastes of society may require.<sup>23</sup>

*Utility* became a watchword.

This emphasis upon drawing as a practical skill was aimed at those Americans who believed themselves to be a new people, distinguished by an in-born genius for technical innovation. Supposedly, the isolation brought on by the War of 1812 had forced the citizens of the New Republic to build their own factories and to make their own machinery. According to the theories of the day, this lesson in self-reliance made Americans aware of their own inventive genius. The Democratic Senator from Maine, John Ruggles, who helped to draft the bill for the reorganization of the Patent Office, called the 1830s the "age of inventions." In 1836 he boasted that "we can go into no mechanic shop, into no manufactory of any description, upon no farm or plantation, or travel a mile on our railroads or in our steamboats, without seeing the evidence of our originality." He noted that America's industrial accomplishments were an "astonishing development of human ingenuity, [which] have never taken place in any other age or country." The authors of the drawing manuals sought to harness this rising enthusiasm by insisting that learning to draw stimulated those parts of the human mind which gave birth to practical inventions. A knowledge of drawing helped the artisan and the industrialist contribute to America's material progress.<sup>24</sup>

The emphasis which the art crusaders placed on the "practical benefit of drawing" separated them from other art promoters. A "doctrine of artistic exclusiveness," as John Kouwenhoven has called it, pervaded the foggy rhetoric about art in America during the nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> Most contemporaries insisted that America's concern for utility was incompatible with the European tradition of fine art. Our "practical civilization," wrote one American, "has imperiled the higher development of the aesthetic."<sup>26</sup> John Gadsby Chapman denied this, and pointed his finger at shortsighted, simple-minded politicians who "have convulsed the land with schemes, and plans, and measures of protection." "Even in the old world," he continued, "men do not use tariffs to protect themselves. They have remedied manufacturing defects by drawing closer and closer the connection between the artist and the workman." Our governing officials "have lost sight of one of the great and primary causes of the evil," Chapman explained, "the want of artistical education among our workmen."<sup>27</sup>

There were additional benefits. The writer could illustrate his text. "A traveler might sketch a beautiful scene," noted the anonymous author of the *Classical Drawing Book*, "for future use, either in the way of business, or elegant conversation."<sup>28</sup> The farmer could learn to "arrange with taste, and beautify his grounds."<sup>29</sup> Drawing had unlimited utility.

John Rubens Smith summarized: ". . . the various branches of our art constitute the universal language to the mechanic, the engineer's handmaid, the bosom friend of the naturalist, the architect's right hand, and the imperishable record of a nation's fame, in pictures and monuments of her deserving sons, as heroes, statesmen & c."<sup>30</sup>

Smith's call for artists to paint the nation's history was part of a larger question: the relationship between art and nationalism. His drawing manuals, as well as those by other crusaders, revealed a self-consciousness about the failure of art to spread rapidly throughout the United States. Virtually every book was defensive in tone, and each insisted (almost frantically) that when a popular American art did come into existence it would be totally divorced from the "pumps and vanities so closely connected with superstition, popery, or aristocracy."<sup>31</sup> This negative description was a direct retort to the slurs of Europeans like Michel Chevalier, a Frenchman who came to America in 1831 to study the banking system for the bourgeois king, Louis Philippe. While praising Americans for their practicality, Chevalier lampooned their culture. "There are a hundredfold more gleams of taste and poetical genius in the brain of the most beggarly *lazzarone* of Naples," wrote Chevalier, "than in that of the republican mechanic or farmer of the New World."<sup>32</sup> Another visitor concurred. The "arts in America," observed M. Tajan Roge in 1856, "were and always would continue to be, exotics, hardly to be kept alive in glass houses and with a liberal expenditure of artificial heat."<sup>33</sup>

The authors of drawing books did not react to foreign criticism with blatant chauvinism. They did not sympathize, for example, with the hyperpatriotism of the new American Art Union (1839–1851) which boasted that it was "an American Association founded upon American principles, fashioned by experience after American views, sustained by American patronage; and our aim shall be to promote the permanent advance of American art."<sup>34</sup> The

art crusaders believed that the art of the present must feed on the art of the past. To Americans this meant a conscious attempt to see the works of European masters. William Cullen Bryant's call for devotion to "that wilder image"—an art created by going into the wilderness instead of the formal academies—was nonsense to the crusaders. Artists had to be aware of the standards set by the past in order to evaluate their own works.<sup>35</sup>

The crusaders insisted that a democratic art was not a local or even national "folk" expression. Their art would not grow from below, from the base of the cultural pyramid. Rather, crusaders like John Rubens Smith and Rembrandt Peale taught a style of drawing which, though produced by an aristocratic tradition, was adapted to a republican society. A "popular art" or a "democratic art" did not have to look any different from an "aristocratic art." But it was addressed to all men and open to their judgment.

While the manuals expressed a moderately cosmopolitan attitude, they did not ignore nationalism. Few authors were pure aesthetes. They did not echo the sentiments of the art collector James Jackson Jarves (1820–1880). Reproving all chauvinists in 1855, he wrote: "Art knows neither nation nor person. Like beauty it is universal, with principles derived not from the institutions of men, but the works of God."<sup>36</sup> Rather, the tone of the manuals lay somewhere between the universalism of Jarves and the nationalism of the American Art Union. Among the major authors, John Gadsby Chapman was the most nationalistic. He called for an end to America's dependence on Europe for paintings and statues. If Americans learned to draw, he wrote in 1847, the "cast-off frippery of European garrets and workshops will no longer find place beside our home productions in the Fine and Industrial Arts." The United States was filled with "vast resources of mind and matter with which a bountiful Providence has endowed our land," continued Chapman, "and, although we have no vast cathedrals or regal palaces to fill with pictures and statues, . . . we have a vast, an independent and intelligent people to appeal to: who need only to be shown the truth, to know and maintain it."<sup>37</sup>

While Chapman's patriotism found support in newspapers and magazines, most crusaders found him too nationalistic. Their patriotism was expressed in their illustrations: scenes of the *American*

landscape would inspire any student to try his hand at drawing. The black-and-white lithographs of John T. Bowen's *The United States Drawing Book* (1839), for example, depicted "some of the most beautiful scenery in the United States, which, it is presumed, will form an interesting portion of the

work." His choice of subjects showed a determined effort to shun sectional bias. "Natural Bridge, Virginia" (Figure 10), "Head Waters of the Juniata" (Figure 11), and "View of Albany" (Figure 12) suggest that Bowen (or some other artist) traveled around the country, trying to make the manual a



FIGURE 10.—"Natural Bridge, Virginia" by John T. Bowen, *The United States Drawing Book*, plate 29 (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).



FIGURE 11.—“Head Waters of the Juniata” by John T. Bowen, *The United States Drawing Book*, plate 27 (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).

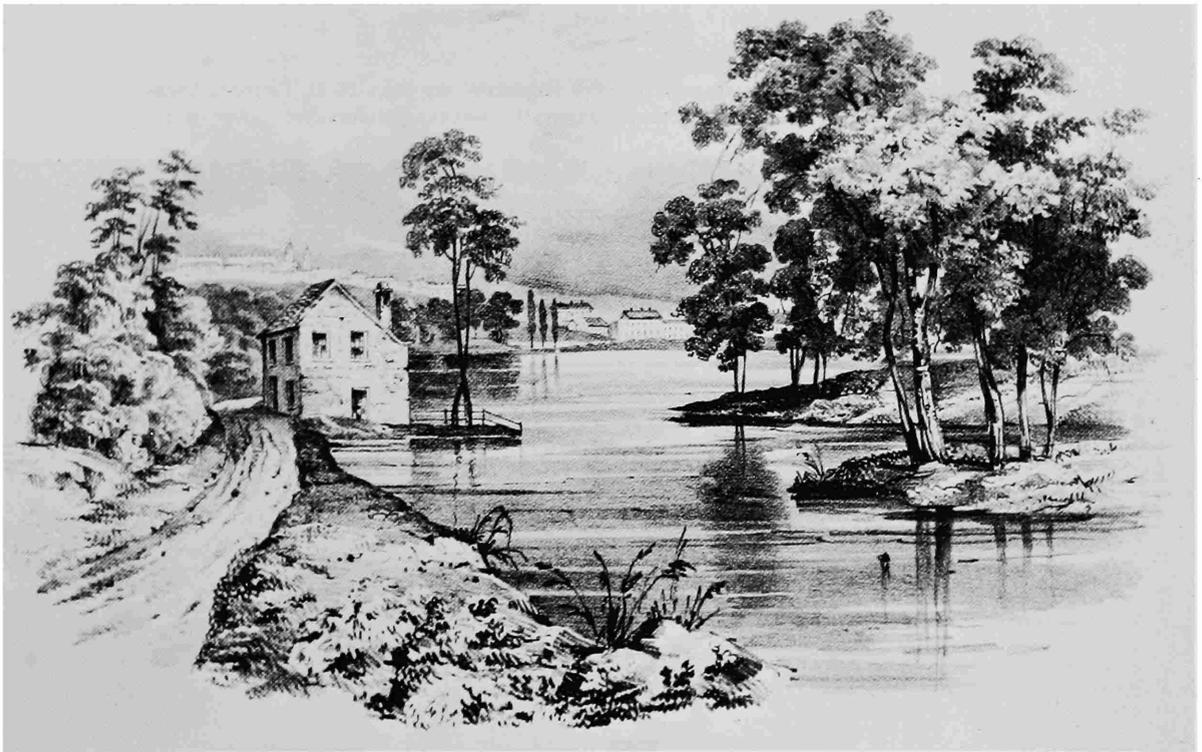


FIGURE 12.—“View of Albany” by John T. Bowen, *The United States Drawing Book*, plate 34 (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).



FIGURE 13.—“View on the Susquehannah” by John H. B. Latrobe, *Lucas' Progressive Drawing Book*, part 2, plate X (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS).

FIGURE 14.—“Passage of the Juniata through Warrior Mountain” by John H. B. Latrobe, *Lucas' Progressive Drawing Book*, part 2, plate XII (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS).



mirror of the nation's landscape. Four years later, Joseph B. Mudge informed the readers of *The American Drawing Book* (1843) that his purpose was "to unite with the elements of art subjects most agreeable to the American student."<sup>38</sup> John Latrobe, author of *Lucas' Progressive Drawing Book*, agreed with Mudge: "In order to give interest to the work, and to stamp it with a national character, we have endeavored, as much as possible, to make it a collection of American views, taken from original sketches."<sup>39</sup> Charming aquatints, like "View on the Susquehannah" (Figure 13) and "Passage of the Juniata through Warrior Mountain" (Figure 14) were intended to give the reader a sense of pride in America and in an art which could capture its natural beauty.

More than a nationalistic bias, a sectionalism characterized most manuals. Those by Benjamin Coe, a drawing teacher and landscape painter, have a distinctly New England "tone." The picturesque covered bridge, the small pond nestled delicately in

the gentle slopes of the northern Appalachians, and the neat and tidy New England farm indicate a preoccupation with the landscape of the northeast. The very title of a series of manuals by John Henry Hopkins, the first Episcopal Bishop of Vermont, speaks for itself: *Vermont Drawing Books*. Grandiose Southern mansions, shaded by stately magnolia trees and surrounded by fields of cotton, were absent from the American drawing books. Not one manual, for example, was published in Charleston, South Carolina. While the residents there promoted the fine arts in the early days of the new republic, their interest waned by 1830. Even the newer cities to the west, like Cleveland and Cincinnati, published their own drawing books, but these manuals were derived from works published in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

In short, the landscape imagery of the northeastern section of America became the dominant imagery of the drawing books and it came to symbolize American subject matter for a democratic art.

## Chapter Two

# The Artist as a Public Man

**I**N THEIR DESIRE to create a democratic art, John Rubens Smith, Rembrandt Peale, and John Gadsby Chapman went so far as to suggest, from time to time, that the average man could become the ultimate authority on artistic merit. Yet, in their writings they insisted that artists were important for the single reason that they were not average men. The reason for spreading art or for democratizing it, in fact, was the ability of art to transform everyday men from insensitive work-a-day creatures into positive receptors (if not creators) of the beautiful.

This conflict between the demands of a high culture and the needs of a democratic society surfaced repeatedly in the nineteenth century. But it was particularly poignant in the case of John Rubens Smith, Rembrandt Peale, and John Gadsby Chapman. All were professional artists with professional ambitions. Having studied in Europe during the intellectual reign of Sir Joshua Reynolds (1770–1830) they found inspiration in the work of past masters like Raphael and Massacio, Guido and Domenichino. They believed that with hard work and encouragement they would become modern masters—maybe even the founders of a school of American art. Dreaming of success, they soon were disillusioned. They found their heroic desire to paint great historical themes ignored by their countrymen. Visual insensitivity seemed to be the core of the American mind, and even the most elementary principles of drawing were unknown to the masses. But unlike many artists who ridiculed attempts to create a popular art, these men worked with sober optimism; at times they even expressed themselves in the enthusiastic rhetoric of the Jacksonian Democrats.

The idea of an academic artist appealing to the masses was a unique phenomenon at the start of the nineteenth century. And yet, by 1830, riding the swell of Jacksonism, numerous artists, politicians, and journalists were insisting that an American artist must be a public man, a professional with a social consciousness. Speaking to members of the

National Institution for the Promotion of Science in 1841, Secretary of War Joel R. Poinsett insisted that the true artist in a democratic society must be a teacher. His democratic mission was to cultivate the taste of the masses.<sup>1</sup> Twelve years later George Putnam, the prominent publisher, repeated Poinsett's message. Condemning any artist who "becomes merely a decorator and not a teacher," Putnam called for all artists to educate their fellow citizens. A blistering editorial in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* berated the social uselessness of the National Academy of Design in New York, and then lashed out against those artists who worked only on private commissions. "Remember," Putnam said, "in this age of clippers[,] artists must turn their talents into a channel that will pay. . . . Let the academy institute a wood-engraving department, a glass-staining department and Art will flourish here as it did in Rome in the days of Leo X . . . ; for art, literature, and science are nought [sic] unless they minister to the *public needs* and conform with *popular tastes*."<sup>2</sup> And George Bancroft, the nineteenth-century historian of American democracy, expressed similar opinions. The patriotic artist, extolled Bancroft to the New York Historical Society, toils "for the People" and molds "that general instinct which makes itself perceived in the people." That "specific, particular, and sometimes false taste that belongs to the individual" has no place in a democracy.<sup>3</sup>

These were strange words for artists to hear or to understand. Finding themselves in a profession which had enjoyed the patronage of saints, kings, and bankers, the artists of America were supposed to become public men with a natural instinct for perceiving public needs and tastes. But, unlike the idealistic Bancroft who preached the divine origins and destinies of democracy, even the most free-thinking art crusaders refused to place an unqualified faith in the common man. Their own careers proved to them that American society was naturally tasteless, always in a rush, seldom pausing to reflect on the nature of beauty—much less on the beauty of

nature. The diluting perils of mass education (forewarned by James Fenimore Cooper and many others) were maliciously real. "This is no country for arts or letters," Cooper wrote to sculptor Horatio Greenough in 1843. "The instant a man knows anything, he gets out of sight of it, for every thing is referred to the common mind." Cooper did not believe in a "superior collected intelligence" due to the fact "that Public opinion drags every thing to its own level, up or down, forming a very reputable mediocrity, but a mediocrity after all."<sup>4</sup> Smith, Peale, and Chapman all feared the fundamental truth behind Cooper's gloomy outlook: that a democratic art *would* be mediocre. And yet they worked to level taste upward, to make the democratic art become a high expression of popular will.

The art crusade began in 1822 with the publication of John Ruben Smith's *The Juvenile Drawing Book*. But long before its appearance, Smith had worked in the cause of art. He was born of a prominent London family on 23 January 1775.<sup>5</sup> His father, John Raphael Smith, a famous artist-engraver, operated a successful engraving studio in London, which was occasionally visited by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, George Romney, and Thomas Lawrence (among others). Young Smith attended classes at the Royal Academy, and from 1796 to 1811 he exhibited there 45 paintings in the yearly exhibitions.<sup>6</sup> He learned engraving, mezzotint, stipple, and aquatint in his father's shop; so by the 1790s he was well instructed in both the academics and the business of painting and print-making.

Despite his formal training and the opportunities offered by his father's studio, Smith never became a great artist. Perhaps America looked inviting because there was less competition. Whether this is the answer, or whether perhaps he was dismayed by the Napoleonic wars, or encouraged by the American demand for portraiture, or stimulated by the challenge to build a new, popular art in the former colonies, Smith arrived in Boston harbor around 1806.<sup>7</sup> Armed with letters of introduction from two American artists he had met in London, Benjamin West and Washington Allston, he soon made the acquaintance of Gilbert Stuart, Thomas Sully, and Bass Otis. His European experiences made him the most thoroughly schooled artist in Boston. Petitioned by 21 prominent women, Smith opened a drawing academy in 1807, where he taught 131

students the basic skills of drawing and perspective.<sup>8</sup> This was the first of several schools which Smith founded during his 32 years of residence in America; others were in New York City, Philadelphia, and Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>9</sup> While his lectures were often technical, and addressed to working artists, they (according to one witness) "were attended by a great number of non-professional people."<sup>10</sup>

As one of the first professional art critics in the United States, Smith took an abnormal joy in denouncing *amateurs*. "Our criticism," he boasted, "shall be founded on acknowledged *professional principles*." Writing under the name "Neutral Tints" for the *National Advocate* (New York City), he reviewed the works exhibited at the American Academy in 1817 with the trained eye of a master artist. Lampooning nearly every work, he insisted that the show was "distinguished more by novelty than by merit." The paintings by William Dunlap were ridiculed mercilessly. In one review, for example, Smith advised Dunlap:

Ply, then the bright portecrayon, till you find  
Correctness with facility combined;  
Till the firm outline flows at your command,  
And forms become familiar to your hand.

Another picture he simply wrote off as "mechanism without mind, devoid of breadth and destitute of the first principles of perspective." His most bitter commentary concerned Dunlap's position as keeper and librarian for the American academy. "Tis fortunate for the reputation of the painter," wrote Smith, "that his situation as Keeper enables him to remove such of his own works as are laughed at, and we heartily wish some of his brother academicians had a like privilege."<sup>11</sup>

Despite his harsh criticism and his pompous tone, Smith's writings are his important achievements. As author of at least five drawing manuals published between 1822 and 1844, John Rubens Smith provided both the philosophy and the pedagogy for an art crusade. *The Juvenile Drawing Book* (1822), *A Compendium of Picturesque Anatomy* (1827), *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure* (1831), *Chromatology* (1839), and a small, pocket-size work also called *The Juvenile Drawing Book* (1844) revealed Smith's conviction that a popular art required an ordered, rational system of drawing instruction.<sup>12</sup> The private drawing classes in fashionable boarding

schools would not lead to a new, democratic art, said Smith. They were established on "contradictory principles" or "on no principle at all, held together by sycophancy and cheapness in place of talent." Ideally, America needed a complete system of state and local academies which taught one style of art. There is no substitute for "personal communication," noted Smith in 1831, "but in the absence of *organized public academies*, in the want of diplomated or duly authorized teachers, it may not be deemed presumptuous" to publish drawing manuals based on a "method and rules matured by thirty years' experience." In the preface to *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, he hoped that his work would "pave the way for introducing academical institutions . . . by creating . . . a soil for them to cultivate." Books were simply a beginning. They were written, in Smith's words, to give "due direction to public tastes."<sup>13</sup> Although they never became best sellers, some of Smith's manuals went into eight editions, and considering that *The Juvenile Drawing Book* (1822) sold in three oversized volumes at \$27.00, it is amazing that any copies were sold at all.

The praise these works received from American artists John Trumbull, Thomas Sully, Asher Brown Durand, and Rembrandt Peale suggests that Smith's manuals contained those ideas which some American painters cherished. Praising the *Compendium of Picturesque Anatomy*, Washington Allston wrote:

... it is with pleasure I can give to it my sincere approbation as a work much needed, and of immediate and practical utility to all students of the several branches of the fine arts, for whose benefit it is intended. With this opinion I perform but an act of duty in recommending it to the patronage of the public.

Gilbert Stuart informed Smith that he was "pleased to see a work of this sort, executed upon its true principles, and hope you will be patronized by a discerning public." He even joked that Smith had "explained away the art so much there is scarce any art left; I suppose he means to shut up school and live on its sale."<sup>14</sup>

Seven years after the appearance of Smith's *Compendium*, Rembrandt Peale published *Graphics*. Judging from the scraps of evidence, it appears to have enjoyed the largest circulation of any American drawing book before the Civil War. First published in 1834 by two New York firms, J. P. Peaslee and R. B. Collins, this influential work represented

Peale's dogged determination to bring art to the people. Written when Peale was in his mid-50s, *Graphics* was the distillation of more than 30 years of feverish experience: of sound pedagogy, showmanship, and artistry.<sup>15</sup>

John Neal, a fellow art enthusiast, described Rembrandt Peale as a tireless worker, "haunted day and night" with "magnificent spectres of genius."<sup>16</sup> Peale painted more than one thousand pictures and wrote several exhibition catalogs, some magazine articles, and three books.<sup>17</sup>

Like John Rubens Smith, Rembrandt Peale still awaits his biographer. The colorful career of his versatile and talented father, Charles Willson Peale (a pioneer in the promotion of painting in the New Republic), has overshadowed the son's gargantuan efforts to make America receptive to all phases of the fine arts. A cosmopolitan artist belonging to an international coterie of painters and sculptors, Rembrandt visited the Royal Academy in London (1802) and painted portraits from life of Houdon and David in Paris (1808). He even debated the relative difficulties of working on a canvas or in stone with the Danish sculptor Thorvaldson, in Rome (1828-1830). Making no fewer than five round trips across the Atlantic, he spent six of his best years in Europe, where he studied the works of old masters and made more than a casual acquaintance with many of the major artists in the western hemisphere during the first half of the nineteenth century.

*Graphics* was the fortunate product of Peale's unique combination of talents: his drawing skill and his inventive fancy. His intimate knowledge of art allowed him to express himself clearly. But his probing mind made the lessons stimulating, thus avoiding the turgid, and sometimes ponderous, rhetoric of John Rubens Smith. By combining lessons on writing with "simple" rules for drawing, he sought to inculcate his belief that drawing was a universal form of writing which transcended any particular alphabet.<sup>18</sup> In a letter to Miss Mary J. Peale, his niece, Rembrandt cautioned that the small pocket size of his drawing book must not deceive her into thinking that *Graphics* was a simple volume for young children. He emphasized that the "explanations are *very short* and require great attention to the *meaning*." Good drawing, he said, was the basis of beautiful painting. For strength of conviction he could have quoted his father, who on 28 August 1823

had written to Rembrandt: "Truth is better than a high finish. The Italians say, Give me a true outline and you may fill it up with turd."<sup>19</sup> Rembrandt Peale inherited his father's belief that high art was the product of practice and understanding, not innate talent. He insisted that drawing and painting were to be clear, direct statements that emanated from the artist's mind. Reason was the basis of art.<sup>20</sup> In a book of poetry which he edited, *Portfolio of an Artist* (1839), Peale included Emerson's definition of art as "nature passed through the alembic of man."<sup>21</sup> He was also familiar with Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy's poetic treatise *De arte graphica*. Two ideas from *De arte graphica* were basic to Peale's *Graphics*. Du Fresnoy insisted that all beautiful figures were composed of "large flowing, gliding outlines" and that the artist was not simply to copy nature, but should rearrange it into a beautiful composition. Both concepts lie at the heart of everything Peale had to say about drawing. The popularity of *Graphics* gave these ideas a place at the core of popular thought during the period 1830–1860.<sup>22</sup>

Rembrandt Peale's success was due in some measure to his skills as a promoter. Whether organizing tours of his own paintings or operating museums in Baltimore and Philadelphia, he showed both rhetorical skill and bold imagination. *Graphics*, promised Peale, would "teach drawing and writing with more pleasure and in less time than writing alone is attained by the old methods."<sup>23</sup> This approach made drawing a practical skill, not a leisurely pastime. Mustering his experience as an art promoter, he wrote letters to the heads of the common school systems in the various states bordering his native Pennsylvania. When congratulatory remarks came his way, he publicized them. In one letter dated 14 December 1837, for example, he informed T. H. Burrows, secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, that P. M. Wetmore, a regent of New York University, found *Graphics* to be an enlightened manual. Wetmore noted:

I have carefully examined this volume, and am satisfied that your theory is founded on philosophical principle(s). I have also submitted the work to a practical test in that branch of education of my children to which it relates—The results have been such as to confirm my belief in its utility. . . . Whenever the Board of Regents will act in reference to similar subjects it will afford me pleasure to bear my testimony to the practical usefulness of your valuable publication.<sup>24</sup>

Knowing the public demands, Peale stressed that

in addition to writing, *Graphics* had practical "application to Geography." After following Peale's instruction, "one boy, in 15 minutes, drew from memory a large map of Europe correctly. . . . Another drew one of South-America in 8 minutes." Learning to draw also gave students the power to see proportions accurately. This, said Peale, was a third practical benefit: it provided the best training in the fundamentals of arithmetic.<sup>25</sup>

Peale applied his ideas by teaching drawing in the Philadelphia High School, beginning around 1840. This experience provided the material which enlarged the fourth edition of *Graphics* by 38 pages. He also taught classes on Saturday afternoon to "Teachers in various Public Schools, having signified their desire to become practically acquainted with . . . Graphics [sic]." Although he promoted the drawing manual with intense fervor, he continually insisted that it was intended only for elementary instruction.<sup>26</sup> Peale had drawn up a prospectus for a *Progressive Drawing Book* which, presumably, would pick up where *Graphics* left off. But as in so many other instances when Peale failed to see his projects through to their conclusions, the book never materialized. Writing from Philadelphia to Daniel Lippincott in 1841, Peale noted:

. . . by beginning with the High School here, in which with 250 boys I have fully listed [sic] the efficacy of my system. It would . . . be a good time to begin my progressive Drawing Book—but not having it, as soon as my boys had gone through the *Graphics*, I procured such as were to be had in the Stores—Childs', Prouts', and Hardings' Elementary Drawing Books [sic], and Fairland's [sic] . . . of the human figure.<sup>27</sup>

The books by the English authors George Childs and James Duffield Harding were popular in the United States. Peale was simply following the practice of many crusaders who used European drawing books when American manuals were unavailable.

Peale's published writings expressed a deep faith in the power of art to benefit all members of society—even "weavers and ship-carpenters." In private correspondence, however, Peale was skeptical of the "rabble." "The great multitude of mankind," he wrote in 1835, "are not on the alert to seize upon objects the most worthy of regard, nor to hasten to places where instruction is to be found. On the contrary they are most frequently in a state of indifference or indecision."<sup>28</sup> More than 20 years later he sounded the same note of skepticism. Too many people, wrote Peale in *The Crayon* of 13

June 1855, viewed art as a frill which served as mere trimming in a nation's history. This idea prevailed in spite of the fact that drawing was a practical skill. Peale noted:

It was a portrait painter, *Robert Fulton*, that gave us the power of steam navigation. It was a portrait painter, *S. F. B. Morse*, that devised the magic electric telegraph. It was a portrait painter, *C. W. Peale*, that first made porcelain teeth for himself and a few friends. And I, though a portrait painter, lighted the first city with gas. This is no boast, but may be accepted as an atonement for the practice of a luxurious Art, which is now beginning to be appreciated.<sup>29</sup>

These sentiments were echoed by numerous authors, John Gadsby Chapman being one of the staunchest advocates.<sup>30</sup> His *American Drawing Book* received the highest praise of all the drawing manuals to appear in the United States before the Civil War. Published in parts from 1847 to 1858, the work contained explicit instructions for both artists and mechanics in drawing, painting, etching, and engraving. The completed version appeared in at least seven editions in England and America, the last being published in 1877, three years after Chapman sold his copyright to A. S. Barnes and Co.

Lacking the detailed explanations found in some of John Rubens Smith's books, *The American Drawing Book* was larger and more copiously illustrated than Peale's *Graphics*. Advertised in the *Literary World* as "destined to produce a revolution in the system of popular education, by making the Arts of Design accessible and familiar to all" it also received enthusiastic reviews.<sup>31</sup> In May of 1847, *The Knickerbocker* magazine wrote, "Tell Chapman to crow! [His] directions are clear, simple and forcible; and illustrated at every point by explanatory drawings, which are of such character as at once to convince the reader that he can practice with as much felicity as he can teach. . . ." <sup>32</sup> Even *The Crayon* (December, 1859), the New York journal whose view of art differed from Chapman's, noted that the book "contains an elucidation of the principles of drawing so minutely and clearly analyzed, that the dullest mind cannot fail to comprehend them."<sup>33</sup> Not a single negative review has been found, for most critics looked upon the manual as tangible proof of America's new sophistication in the arts. And they were quick to note that its very title reflected a true sense of patriotism.<sup>34</sup>

The 1858 edition of Chapman's drawing book contained 11 chapters and an enthusiastic introduction which welcomed the student with a picture

of an elegant woman holding out a pencil and a drawing pad. Just below her feet was the crusaders' motto: "ANY ONE WHO CAN LEARN TO WRITE, CAN LEARN TO DRAW." Chapter I showed the elementary exercises in drawing, while chapters II and III dealt with the human figure. Trees, foliage, and review exercises appeared in chapter IV. Chapters V and VI dealt with geometry and perspective; chapter VII taught the basics of painting, while IX and X showed the proper techniques for etching, engraving, and modeling. The final chapter was an explanation of "composition" and a reaffirmation of Chapman's principal theme that "any one who can learn to write, can learn to draw."

By the time the first chapter of his drawing book appeared, Chapman was established as one of America's most patronized artists. *The New York Herald* (December 1840) described him as "an artist of great celebrity," while such literary notables as James Fenimore Cooper and William Cullen Bryant commended his paintings for their excellence and "truthfulness."<sup>35</sup> William Dunlap, the archenemy of John Rubens Smith, rated Chapman, "above all the copyists of Italian pictures who have recently visited Italy except Messrs. Morse and Weir."<sup>36</sup> Even the critical English visitor, Mrs. Trollop, in a rare spurt of compliments, called his painting of "Hagar and Ishamael Fainting in the Wilderness," the finest piece by an American, and she would not have been surprised to learn that it was the first American picture to be published in the prestigious Roman periodical "Giornale di Belle Arti" (1830).<sup>37</sup> One critic called him a "universal genius" and Henry Tuckerman praised him as a Renaissance man who combined

mechanical ingenuity with artistic taste. He is familiar with all the processes of the artisan as well as those of the artist; now at work on a mezzotint and now on a woodcut; today casting an iron medallion, and to-morrow etching on steel; equally at home at the turning-lathe and the easel, and as able to subdue plaster and bronze, as oils and crayons, to his uses.<sup>38</sup>

Although he was familiar with the history of art, Chapman was essentially not an intellectual. He was characterized as a man of "common sense" and a "friend of all mechanics." In a letter from Paris, dated 1848, he expressed an opinion which appeared continually in his writings: "The stalwart smith who forges the heated iron into form, is as much a designer as the sculptor who models the plastic clay

into shapes of beauty, or the painter who produces the expression of life and thought through the means of senseless pigments.”<sup>39</sup> Agreeing with Emerson that “mechanics” deserved training in the fine arts, he addressed *The American Drawing Book* to all members of the American community. He believed that learning to draw “equalizes the nominal advantages of wealth or position, and places the poor man’s son or daughter on an equal footing with those who are only, by the blind favors of chance or fortune, possessed of superior advantages.” His drawing book, then, was designed to educate “even the most simple-minded cow-boy, who may have gone that road or waded that brook a thousand times, unconscious of the beauty that surrounded him, until it was developed by the hand of Art.”<sup>40</sup>

Chapman did not want his domestic sympathies to lower his artistic standards. Art could rest on democratic principles only when problems of mass education were solved. Quality should not be displaced by quantity. “A high standard of excellence in art is what we want in America,” he wrote to his friend, Gouverneur Kemble, on 28 February 1854. “Give us that, and the elements of a great achievement in art will develop themselves in a way but little dreamt of.” Despite his sympathies with the working class (the Jacksonian “common man”), he expressed a fear that “more has been done among us in late years to diffuse art than elevate its standard of excellence—to create for mediocrity than stimulate to high achievement, to place the cunning of the workman above the artist.” His refrain had a familiar message.<sup>41</sup>

Throughout his lifetime, Chapman desired to be a great painter of historical themes. But his natural talents lay in the field of book illustration. The 1830s and 1840s saw a pictorial revolution in popular literature, and Chapman was swept up in this burgeoning industry. Beginning in 1834, he illustrated periodicals and books of every description. Renowned for the 1400 wood engravings he designed for Harper’s monumental *Illuminated Bible* (1843–1846), he was praised as a workman “who for facility of designing and rapidity and punctuality in executing, is without an equal among living artists.” The precision and delicacy of his woodblocks gave them the appearance of copper engravings. After seeing the pictures in *The American Drawing Book*, one observer insisted that he knew of “no other book

like this, so good, so perfect in all it undertakes.”<sup>42</sup> His works made their way into countless homes, to readers of every class and persuasion, and Chapman was one of those popular Americans who made art, according to Henry Tuckerman (1867), a popular agent “which few men whose lot is cast in this republic can resist.”<sup>43</sup>

Success in this “lesser” endeavor did not satisfy Chapman. He actually detested the business of graphics. As early as 1841 he complained that “in drawing wood blocks and etching metal—no one knows the waste of mind and thought that these things cost me.”<sup>44</sup> He insisted as late as the 1860s that his famed drawing book—widely known though it was—still failed to pay expenses. The time spent on it, he explained, had cost him lucrative commissions.<sup>45</sup> The financial strain was difficult to live with and in an early woeful letter written to William Kemble in 1841, Chapman noted:

Sometimes I have half a mind to hoist the auctioneer’s flag over every thing I have and clear off bag and baggage to Rome or Paris where I know I can, to do the most, do better than I am doing here—It is a mortifying feeling to be aware that you are regarded by the society around you as useless and at the same time know that there are other places where your trade pursuits would command both notice and support.<sup>46</sup>

Nearly nine years before he succeeded in selling the rights to the drawing manual, he wrote, “I wish I could sell it out entirely and have done with it—”<sup>47</sup>

Like other reformers, Chapman felt within him a tension between his devotion to *the cause* and his natural drive for self-improvement. Book illustrations and drawing manuals may have educated and entertained countless readers, but they failed to quench Chapman’s own thirst for knowledge of the higher arts. In 1847 he sailed for Rome, where he lived for most of his remaining 34 years. Whether his failing health (of which he wrote continually), his numerous debts, or his dislike for the rush of the publishing business drove him from America is unknown.<sup>48</sup> His flight symbolized the tensions felt by the art crusaders. Like so many others, including Smith and Peale, Chapman was a man of passion, totally committed both to teaching Americans to appreciate art and to painting his own “masterpieces.” Doing both proved impossible. He feared that as time hastened by, the barren cultural landscape of America might be stunting his talents as a painter.<sup>49</sup> He yearned for greatness as an artist; success as a teacher was no substitute.

## Chapter Three

# Learning to See

TWO APPROACHES to drawing guided the art crusade. One was an eighteenth-century academic theory, described most vividly by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which insisted that a knowledge of drawing helped a person understand and appreciate the paintings of old masters. The second involved the relationship between perception and moral education, a theory taken directly from the writings of the Swiss educational philosopher, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827).

Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses on the Fine Arts* (1769–1790), delivered before the Royal Academy in London, was not a body of unique ideas, for many of the things he had to say could be found in the works of earlier critics like the Englishman Jonathan Richardson (*Essay on the Theory of Painting*, 1715), and the Frenchman Roger de Piles (*The Principles of Painting*).<sup>1</sup> Nor were the *Discourses* the only treatise read by Americans interested in academic painting. But for clarity and eloquence the work stood alone.

Reynolds believed that beauty was a fixed concept sanctioned by history. Any person aspiring to become an artist was encouraged to learn a standard vocabulary of forms based on the art of the past. The first discourse was unequivocal: "An implicit obedience to the *Rules of Art*, as established by the practice of the great MASTERS, should be exacted from the *young students*."<sup>2</sup> As for drawing directly from nature, Reynolds raised a sign of caution. In his view, art was to imitate nature only by representing "general truths." Particularity was shunned as being accidental and ephemeral. Reynolds wrote that "every species of animal, as well as the vegetable creation may be said to have a fixed or determinate form toward which nature is continually inclining."<sup>3</sup> The true artist tried to express the purpose of nature by knowing the "ideal type" of any species.

All this simply meant that any student should learn ideal forms before he tried to work from nature. After learning to handle a pencil, the aspiring artist copied finished paintings in order to gain

an insight into the secrets of great masters. Finally, armed with experience and knowledge, he attempted to compose his *own* work. Reynolds's insistence upon a knowledge of the past meant that artists were expected to bring to their canvases preconceived notions about their subjects. A "mere copier of Nature can never produce any thing great," wrote the English master in his third discourse, "he must endeavour to improve them by the grandeur of his ideas." The true artist removed any blemishes he found in nature and painted in the "Grand Style."<sup>4</sup>

In spite of Reynolds's recognition of genius, there was a tone or "feeling" in the *Discourses* which suggested that *anyone* could learn the art of painting. Reynolds' maxim, "labour is the only price of solid fame," was quoted or paraphrased by American authors until the time of the Civil War. And they emphasized that drawing instruction would make all citizens sensitive to the grand accomplishments of the past and help them establish a standard for the present. Like other authors, John Gadsby Chapman relied heavily on the *Discourses*. Mining Reynolds's works for wise epithets, he often prefaced his chapters with phrases from the master's pen. "Practice, though essential to perfection," quoted Chapman at the start of chapter III ("The Human Figure"), "can never attain that to which it aims, unless it works under the direction of principle."<sup>5</sup> In the concluding chapter on "Composition," Chapman again turned to the first president of the Royal Academy: "Every man, that can paint at all, can execute individual parts; but to keep those parts in due subordination, as relative to a whole, requires a comprehensive view of the art, that more strongly implies genius than perhaps any other quality whatever."<sup>6</sup>

The works of another crusader, John Rubens Smith, read like a boiled-down, illustrated version of the *Discourses*. Even minor crusaders, like the lithographer Thomas Edwards, quoted Reynolds on the title page of the *Juvenile Drawing Book*.<sup>7</sup>

All borrowed the same ideas. First, they insisted that hard work rather than genius was the only road to success in art. Second, they asserted the importance of rules and principles in drawing, and third, they called for a knowledge of “perfect” styles or forms to simplify the complexities of vision.

Reynolds described a hierarchy of forms within the general category of “painting.” Historical compositions were regarded as the grandest expression of a painter’s talent, while portraits, landscapes, and genre scenes were relegated to lower positions. A lurking sense of inferiority to Europe’s successes, however, weakened the American effort to follow Reynolds’ dictates. One art enthusiast writing for the *North American Review* in 1849 declared that Americans would never equal the great historical painters of Europe. For these artists, he said, had nearly attained perfection. Since America lacked a significant artistic heritage, he suggested that Americans forego historical paintings and turn to landscape. The beauty of the new continent could awaken the artistic genius of any man and inspire Americans to paint pictures which would “surpass all that was accomplished by Claude, Gaspar [sic], or Salvator.”<sup>8</sup>

Authors of the drawing manuals were quick to agree. One of them wrote that the “heavens and earth display their beauties and magnificence in an endless succession of natural pictures, with greater charm to the instructed eye.”<sup>9</sup> Benjamin Coe, in *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing* (1840), assured his students that anyone who practiced drawing would “acquire habits of observation and become alive to the beauties of nature.”<sup>10</sup> And for the observation of nature, what better place than America? The vast natural treasures of the New World could display truth, beauty, and perhaps even divinity. But nature did not reveal her beauty to all men: the student of drawing was most qualified to find it. Teaching Americans how to see the glories of nature, how to distinguish between the permanent and the accidental, became a recurring theme.

This theme was especially poignant. The beauty of nature—whether analyzed by Emerson, sung by Bryant, or painted by Cole—was not a mere passing delight. The perception of beauty yielded profound insights. The crusaders promised that if the entire nation could acquire this “accurate vision,” then American society would come to know truth and morality. The movement for a democratic art, then,

was not merely a popular aestheticism but a sincere belief that Utopia was open to all those who refused to walk through life as one blindfolded.<sup>11</sup>

The crusaders’ concern for seeing the beauty of nature involved new problems which could not be solved by merely understanding the works of old masters. To answer these needs, Americans turned to the writings of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who used drawing as an indispensable tool in the education of children. He believed that nature was the source of truth and the primary teacher of all that is worth knowing. Learning came from sensuous experiences—from looking, smelling, touching, hearing, and tasting things found in nature. These experiences he called “sense-impressions.” At first, these sense-impressions were “irregular, confused, . . . and of limited scope.” The purpose of education was to unravel this confusion and to help students create “clear ideas” about themselves and their world. This clarity was essential for a successful and ethical life: it was the basis of morality and virtue.<sup>12</sup>

According to Pestalozzi, “seeing” was the most fundamental of the five senses. The purpose of elementary education was to help children gain a “perfect accuracy of observation.” Learning began with simple, random observation. From *observation* a student was brought to *comprehension*, and from *comprehension* to *speech*. For example, in *Buch der Mütter* (1803), Pestalozzi included exercises to teach a child that every part of the human body had a name. The instructor was to point out the larger parts of the body, such as the head, arms, and legs, and the child was to repeat these names. Then each part was to be examined by itself to show the student that it, too, consisted of smaller parts—the head, for example, containing eyes, ears, a nose, and mouth. The body was redefined continually in this manner, demonstrating that it consisted of many parts, each contributing to the makeup of the whole. Similar exercises were to be done with any object found in nature until a student understood the relationship between a whole and its parts.<sup>13</sup>

This concept of organic unity rested upon a knowledge of proportion.<sup>14</sup> And a knowledge of proportion was gained by learning to draw straight lines and then measuring their relative lengths with the naked eye (Figures 15, 16, 17). Once the lines were mastered, the student tried his hand at angles and various geometrical figures. He built these forms out of simple lines and learned to divide them

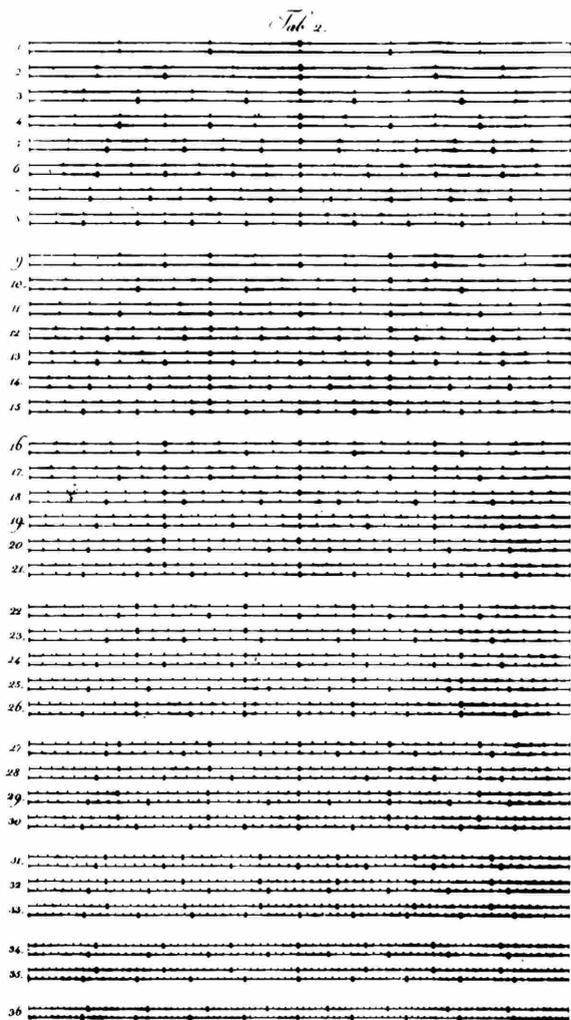


FIGURE 15.—Elementary lines, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, *A B C der Anschauung* (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS).

into smaller parts. Finally, he was encouraged to draw from nature, keeping in mind that any object could be described by use of lines.<sup>15</sup> As Pestalozzi wrote in *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, “Lines, angles, and curves are the foundation of the art of drawing.”<sup>16</sup> Drawing was the foundation of “seeing.” And seeing was the basis of morality.

In his basic work *A B C der Anschauung*, Pestalozzi wrote: “. . . by exercises in lines, angles, and curves . . . a readiness in gaining sense-impressions of all things is produced in the children, as well as skill of hand, of which the effect will be to make everything, that comes within the sphere of their

observation, gradually clear and plain.”<sup>17</sup> The ability to record and describe a sense-impression helped the student comprehend his environment and clarify his ideas about it. With experience, he could begin to differentiate between the “external qualities” and the “essential nature of things.”<sup>18</sup> This sharpened perception aided in the development of knowledge, which (according to Pestalozzi) “grows from confusion to definiteness; from definiteness to plainness; and from plainness to perfect clearness.”<sup>19</sup>

An additional use of drawing instruction was as elementary training in learning to write. Teaching the hand to obey the eye and the mind was deemed essential by Pestalozzi. Drawing taught discipline and manual dexterity, two prerequisites in learning to write.

The art crusaders borrowed heavily from Reynolds and Pestalozzi, but both men often contradicted one another. The naturalism of the Swiss educator sneered at the formal, time-honored commandments of the English academic. Their major disagreement occurred over the meaning or character of beauty. Pestalozzi defined beauty as an activity of the mind: it was a function of perceiving or a process of perceptualization. Beauty was not a set of passive precepts or predetermined forms, but a tool to be used in constructing a “world view.”

For the crusaders’ purposes, Pestalozzi’s methods and exercises proved invaluable in *teaching* a love for art. But his whole educational philosophy suggested chaos, a loose system without fixed standards or rules. The Swiss master warned against any educational theory which demanded that every student learn the same things for the same purposes. Each student, he reasoned, was unique, and should be encouraged to develop his own special talents. With regard to drawing and painting, the American art crusaders disagreed. A democratic art needed rules that everyone could understand. Random “sense impressions” were too irrational, too unpredictable. For art, said the crusaders, was much more than an overflow of emotions and passions.

Reynolds provided an antidote to the threatening disorders of Pestalozzi. In the *Discourses* he defined the essence of beauty as the “Grand Style.” The “ideal” forms of ancient Athens and Renaissance Italy were objective facts. And the art crusaders could show beauty to Americans by reproducing the drawings of Raphael and his talented contempo-

Tab. 3.

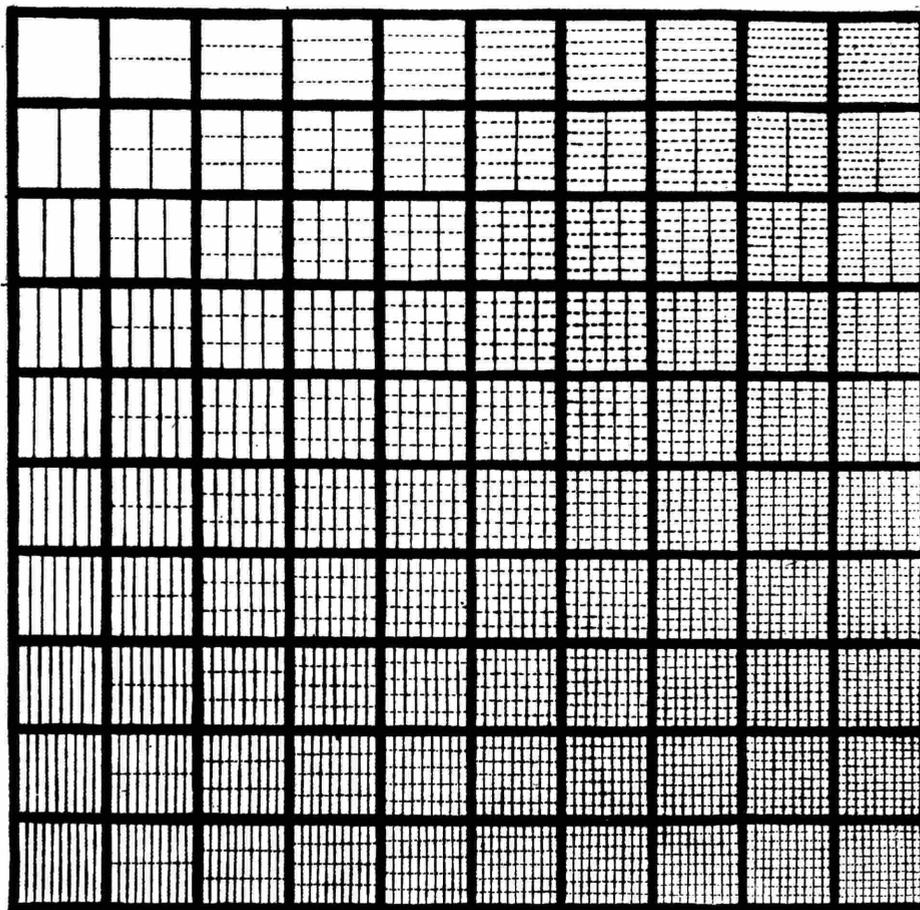


FIGURE 16.—Lines and proportion, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, *A B C der Anschauung*  
(LIBRARY OF CONGRESS).

aries, which Reynolds rated as “beautiful.” They were the standards for a democratic art.

The authors of the drawing books demanded that ideal forms become part of the artist’s vocabulary. They insisted that their readers learn to draw each “ideal” from memory. “A standard of form once impressed on the mind,” wrote Chapman, helps any student “measure all deviations by it.” Memorizing the standard oval for the human head, for example, permitted the artist’s eye “to fix upon the most prominent and characteristic peculiarities” of a real head. The ideal worked as a fixed point of reference, a crutch in discerning specific character traits.<sup>20</sup>

When the crusaders encouraged Americans to seek

beauty in the virgin landscape, they were not pushing Reynolds aside. Instead of waiting for romantic inspiration, students were taught to see with a “constructive eye.” Nature was not infallible, and she did not always show her basic forms or “essence” (to use Pestalozzi’s word). The artist was encouraged to come to the aid of nature, to perfect it with the knowledge of art he learned from old masters and from Reynolds’ *Discourses*.

Learning ideal forms and drawing from memory were not just simple lessons for beginning students. They helped sophisticated artists maintain mental discipline. The Sketching Club, a suborganization of the National Academy of Design, practiced drawing from memory as a regular exercise. Chapman

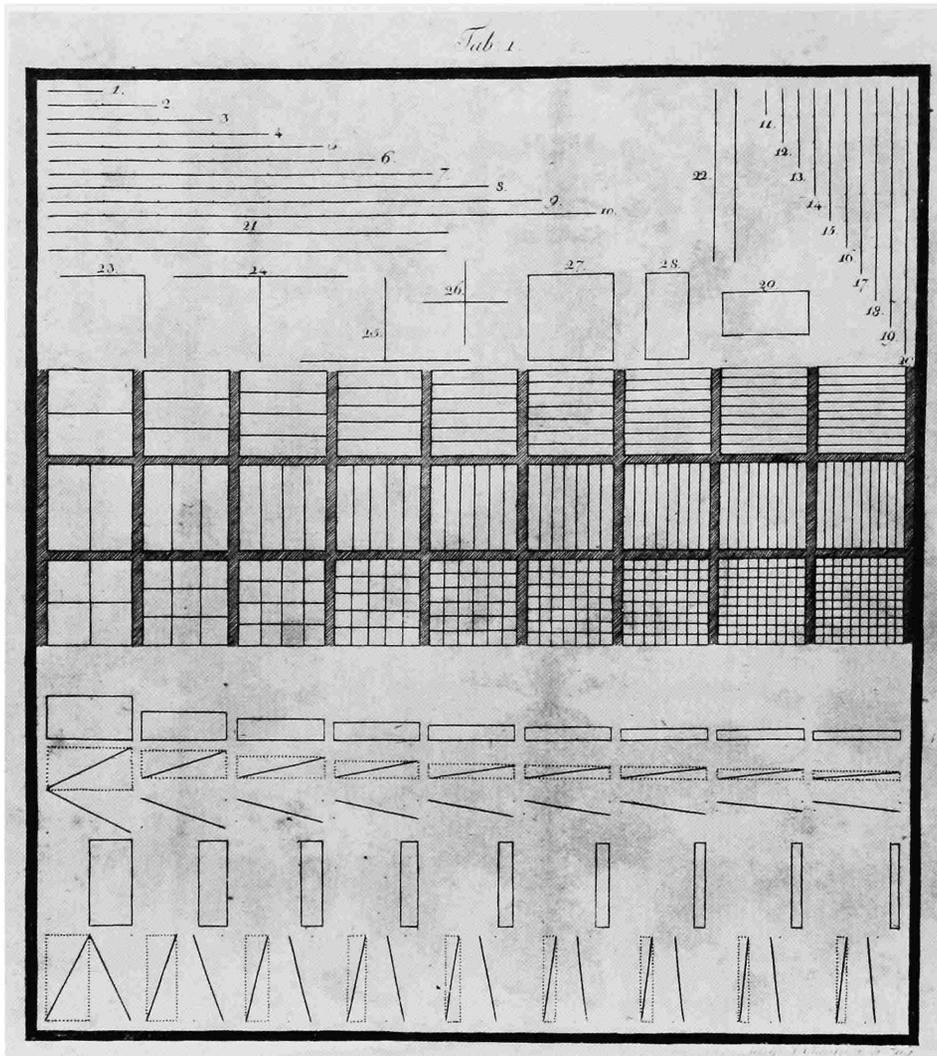


FIGURE 17.—Lines and geometric figures, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, *A B C der Anschauung* (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS).

participated in these sessions as described by Thomas Cummings in the *Historic Annals of the National Academy* (1865).

At the designated hour the company sat down to work—everything ready but the “subject,” which was to that moment unknown. It was then given. The Sketchers were allowed *precisely* ONE HOUR to make their drawing, and at the termination of that the bell rung. The works were all gathered up by the gentleman who gave the subject, whose property they were to be. At the end of the season the sketches were all exhibited, and then distributed to their proper owners.

An artist who draws from memory will tend to show what he believes the object should be instead of what it is. He will be forced to rely on general

types, not on “sense impressions,” which come from observing a real model.

The conflict between “sense impressions” and the “Grand Style,” forced the crusaders to work a compromise. Reynolds, they explained, defined art; Pestalozzi provided methods for learning it. By following Pestalozzi’s exercises of drawing lines and learning proportions, a student gained the skills to draw Reynolds’ ideal forms. By acquiring a keen eye from Pestalozzi, moreover, the young artist learned how to apply Reynolds’ theories to nature. The deviations from the ideal in natural objects, said the crusaders, would be more obvious to an eye that could measure and perceive proportions.

The drawing books, then, were an odd assortment of loosely organized theories and principles, and for that reason it is hard to point to one specific idea and define its origin. We do know that Reynolds was popular in America until the Civil War. The *Discourses* appeared in bookstores throughout the nation and any painter—who worked with serious thoughts—was expected to read it. This is not to say that every artist followed Reynolds' instructions. On the contrary, leading painters moved away from Reynolds during the period of 1820–1860. The direct influence of Pestalozzi is more difficult to assess. Having taught in Switzerland, he wrote in German, a language which few Americans could read. But Pestalozzi's principles were in the air, for, as Horace Mann observed, numerous enthusiasts held Pestalozzi's ideas without ever having heard his name.<sup>21</sup>

William Maclure reported on Pestalozzi's "Method" as early as 6 June 1806 in the *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*. And Joseph Neef's *Sketch of a Plan and Method of Education* (1808) was one of the first formal accounts of Pestalozzi's ideas presented in America. Educational journals like *The Academician* (New York, 1818–1820), the *American Journal of Education* (Boston, 1820–1830), the *Connecticut Common School Journal* (Hartford, 1838–1853), and the *Common School Journal* (Boston, 1838–1852) occasionally described Pestalozzi's success in teaching drawing as part of elementary education.<sup>22</sup>

The first Pestalozzian school in America opened in Philadelphia on 9 June 1809. William Maclure, a Philadelphian who made one of the earliest geological surveys of the United States, financed the early years of this school, which was run by a former associate of Pestalozzi, Joseph Neef. It appears that the venture enjoyed immediate success, and although similar schools did not spring up around the city, Neef's work influenced many educators including Horace Mann and Henry Barnard. The new pedagogy soon made its way north into New England and as far west as St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>23</sup>

It is significant to note that Rembrandt Peale made Philadelphia his home for most of his life. Although he traveled to Europe while Pestalozzi was teaching in Yverdon, it appears that he learned of the famous educator while working in Philadelphia. Peale, for example, believed that the "art of writing, to be taught consistently with nature, ought to be

treated as *subordinate* to that of drawing." In quoting a lengthy passage from Pestalozzi, Peale noted:

Writing itself is a sort of linear drawing and that of stated forms, from which no arbitrary or fanciful deviation is (or should be) permitted. The practice of writing, when acquired *previous* to, independent of, drawing, spoils the hand and mars its freedom, by confining it to a few particular forms on a contracted scale, instead of cultivating in it a general ability for all forms.<sup>24</sup>

Throughout *Graphics* Pestalozzi's influence is obvious. Occasionally, Peale even touched the moral base where Pestalozzi dwelt. In one chapter entitled the "Second Book of Drawing: Education of the Eye," Peale described the influence of sense-impressions on conduct. "As it is the first purpose of Education to cultivate the Ear by the most *correct utterance* of sounds," he wrote, "it should be esteemed of equal importance to cultivate the Eye by the exact analysis and delineation of forms; not only for its collateral aid in Writing and other branches of Education . . . but also for its constant influence in the cause of morals. . . ." <sup>25</sup> Peale never attempted to develop a complete philosophy. Like most of the crusaders who cited both men as sources of truth, he gathered together various ideas without strict regard to logic.

Most authors of drawing books probably never read Pestalozzi's books, but they did read Peale's *Graphics*. It was among the earliest and most successful of all the drawing manuals. John Gadsby Chapman's *The American Drawing Book* seems a direct descendant of Peale's work. Chapman combined lessons on drawing and writing, and paraphrased ideas which appeared in the earliest editions of *Graphics*.<sup>26</sup> At times he surpassed Peale and sounded more like Pestalozzi than Pestalozzi himself. "The impressions of form," wrote Chapman in the introduction of *The American Drawing Book*, "are the first made on the infant mind." One should learn to draw, he noted on another page, to see "nature unfolding her ample volumes, and displaying combinations of beauty and delight, beyond the power of words to tell them of." Occasionally crusaders like Chapman even showed the same sensitivity which made Pestalozzi a great teacher:

. . . the child, who loves his slate better than his book, will soon, by a judicious indulgence, learn to love them both together. The truant and sullen prisoner to the school-bench would become the willing learner; and the early habits, thus acquired, of observation and appreciation of the beauty and wonder of creation, will lead to a healthful thirst for knowledge, the truest and surest incentive to the study of books.<sup>27</sup>

Similar phrases popped up in the manuals by Jehu Brainerd, Fessenden Nott Otis, and Sigismond Schuster.<sup>28</sup> In borrowing from one another, they disseminated Pestalozzi's ideas. Unknowingly, perhaps, they combined the tradition sanctioned by Reynolds with the pedagogy innovated by Pestalozzi.

Joining the ideas of Reynolds and Pestalozzi demonstrated the innovative spirit of the art crusaders. Never before had artists made a prolonged

attempt to teach the masses about drawing and painting. Few artists had even theorized about it, or attempted to write a book explaining how it might be accomplished. There was no precedent for their work, no standard guide, no intellectual framework. They blazed a trail into the intellectual wilderness of mass education; a wilderness which—despite many settlers—has defied taming.

## Drawing by Formula

THE DRAWING BOOKS rested on the broad conviction that *lines* were the essence of form<sup>1</sup>—and not just any lines to be sure. Virtually every manual demanded a *controlled* line. Rembrandt Peale provided the examples illustrated in Figure 18.

Controlled lines had to be straight, they had to be perpendicular or parallel to one another, and they had to be “executed with facility.” Each line was to be exact, never overrunning either the beginning or ending points. Compared to the lines in many twentieth-century manuals, which are of indeterminate length, meandering on a never-ending journey through space, these were definite and complete: they were products of a disciplined mind directing a trained hand, not a spontaneous expression of uncontrolled inspiration. One art historian has called them descriptive.<sup>2</sup> Indeed they were. Rembrandt Peale suggested that students, without the aid of a ruler should practice “making the *centre* of any line, or dividing it into any number of equal parts; and should, by repeated efforts, acquire the power of marking down any number of inches, to be afterwards verified by the scale or carpenter’s rule.”<sup>3</sup> John Rubens Smith concurred. “Beginners,” noted the dean of American drawing instructors, “should commence with objects capable of mathematical demonstration of their accuracy in order to acquire a *correct* eye.”<sup>4</sup> Not only did a line have a beginning and an end, but it could be divided into parts, described by proportions, and measured in inches or feet.

Once a student mastered the “controlled line,” he was instructed to cross a perpendicular line with a horizontal line to make a right angle. From there he was taught to draw simple and then complex geometrical figures.<sup>5</sup> Throughout all these exercises, the authors continually reminded the young artists that any form could be defined by precise lines. This linear vision was the key to capturing the essence of any object. It permitted the artist “to obtain and cultivate a *correct* vision,” to understand the basic structure of any object, and to measure the size and

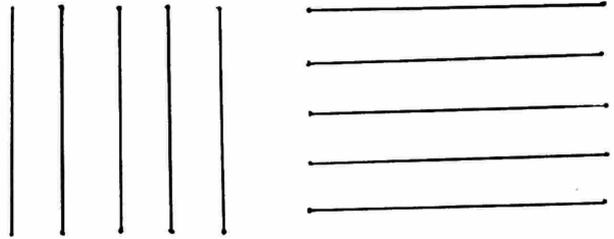


FIGURE 18.—Straight lines, copied from Rembrandt Peale, *Graphics* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

proportions of that object without the need of a “rule, compasses, or the square.” The student was to develop, in the art crusaders’ words, a “COMPASS IN THE EYE.”<sup>6</sup> The drawing manuals were so insistent that a student’s work be mathematically correct that they advised any teacher or monitor to use a ruler “to render instantly . . . any errors the pupil may commit.”<sup>7</sup>

The straight line was the basis of the crusaders’ drawing system. “Do not begin to make . . . figures,” warned Benjamin Coe, “till you are able to draw a perpendicular and horizontal lines.”<sup>8</sup> Even when students sought to draw “the smooth, flowing lines which abound in nature,” they were instructed to use the straight line as a fixed reference to insure that all curves would be balanced and free from “irregular contours.” One learned to draw the proper type of curve, therefore, by passing a straight line through it. Chapman illustrated this as shown in Figure 19.<sup>9</sup>

The straight line served as a gauge. It helped the artist determine whether or not his flowing lines were, in John Rubens Smith’s terms, even and “harmonious.” Jehu Brainerd, author of *Elementary Principles of Plane and Perspective Drawing*, insisted that a “true curve” was one which, “if continued, would meet and form the circumference of a circle.”<sup>10</sup> A harmony founded in mathematical precision was a trademark of the drawing manuals. This order was fundamental because, according to the

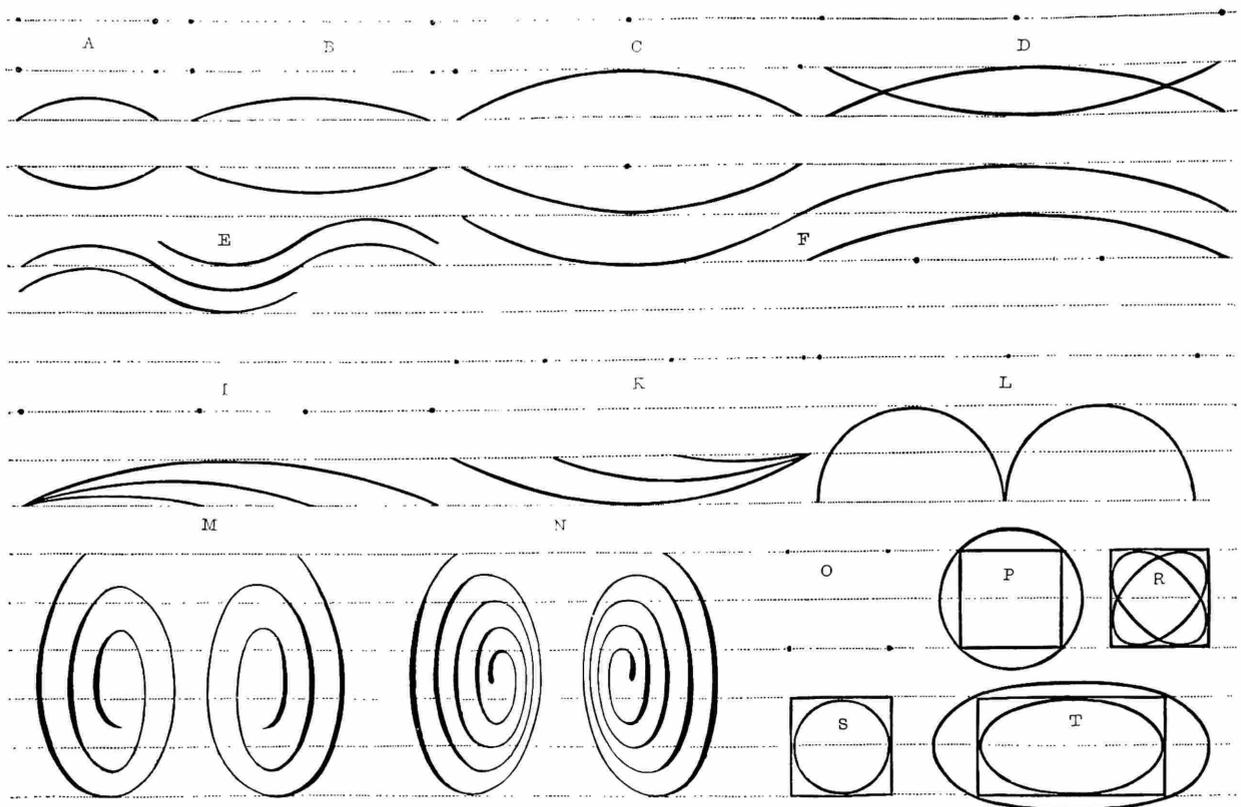


FIGURE 19.—Curved lines, John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

art crusaders, “harmonious” curves revealed the essence of nature. The student was instructed to develop the talent to draw the same type of curves over and over again, because they rendered any object or scene in its most perfect form.

Having mastered the straight line, the harmonious curve, and geometrical figures, students applied their knowledge by drawing, in Benjamin Coe’s words, “simple pictures, which would please from their novelty.”<sup>11</sup> His *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing* included sketches of neat cottages, picturesque towers, and weathered fences (Figure 20). C. P. Huestes’ *Primary Drawing Book* for children emphasized everyday objects like water jugs, carpenters’ hammers, wheelbarrows, or wooden barrels (Figure 21). At first these pictures were to be copied from the manuals. As C. Kuchel insisted in *The Columbian Drawing Book*, the young artist must “be content to be merely a copyist.” But once this skill was perfected, the young draftsmen were encouraged to turn to nature. The art crusaders emphasized that

copying pictures according to sound principles would “cultivate and inform” the student’s mind and “progressively lead him on, so that he may not only learn the use of his pencil, but be made acquainted with facts of nature and art.”<sup>12</sup>

From these earliest lessons, students were taught *how* to see, and *what* to see. They were told that every object had basic linear qualities which could be captured by the competent draftsman. These linear qualities were the essence of that object and, therefore, should be presented in a precise and “correct” manner. John Gadsby Chapman, for example, realized that very often the beginning student would have difficulty seeing these straight lines in objects which appeared to be formed only of curves. He assured his readers, however, that by judicious training, they would be able “to find and see these imaginary straight lines” in objects as difficult to draw as a water pitcher. As illustrated in Figure 22, Chapman showed a useful method for all beginners.

He instructed his students to place a water pitcher

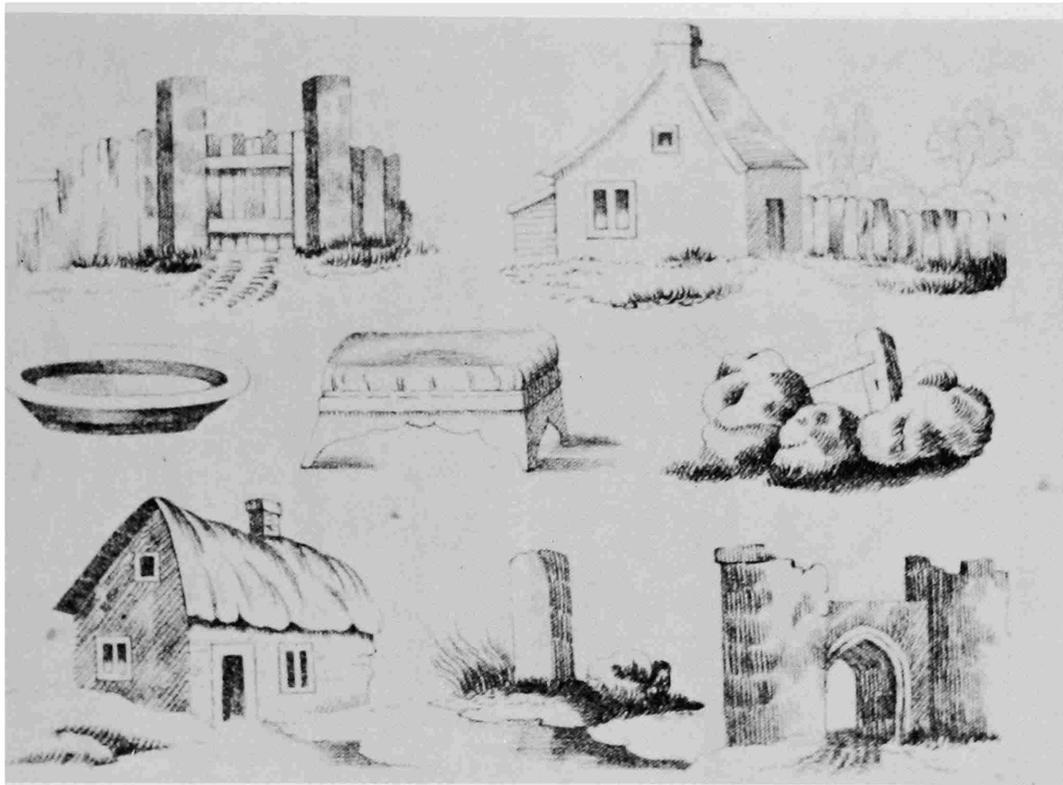


FIGURE 20.—Sketches by Benjamin H. Coe, *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing*, plate 8 (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).

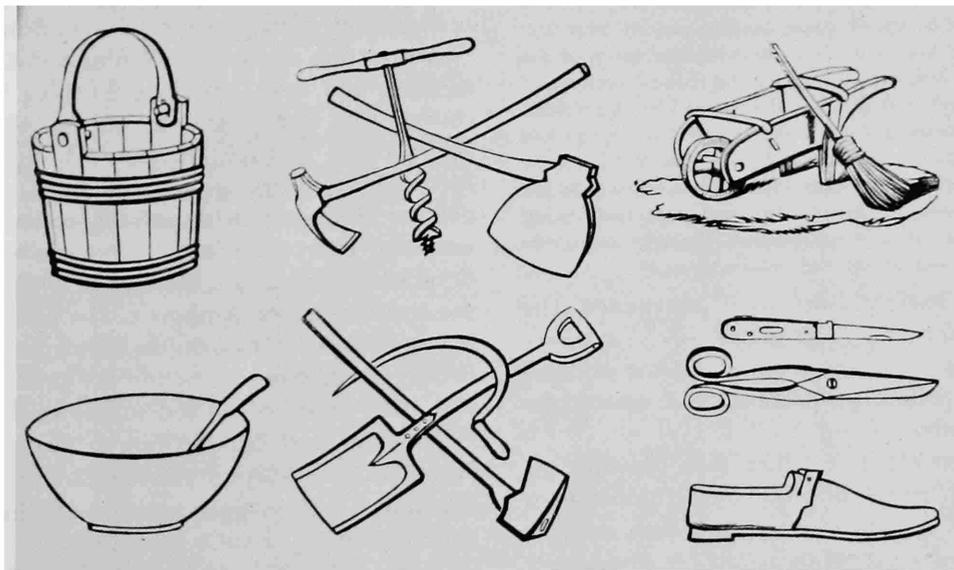


FIGURE 21.—Elementary drawings by C. P. Huestis, *Primary Drawing Book* (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).

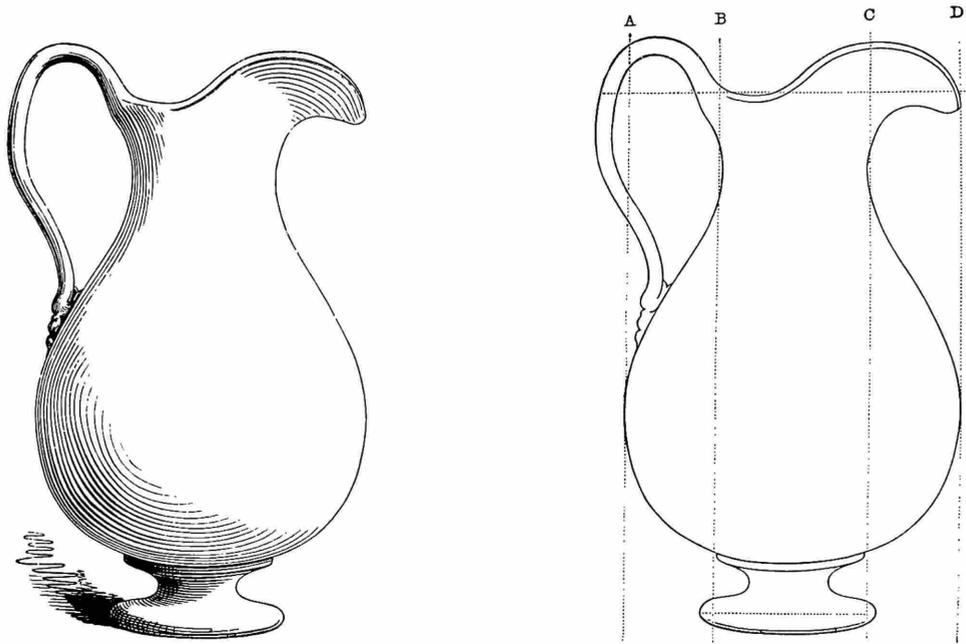


FIGURE 22.—Water pitcher by John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

on a stand a few feet from the drawing desk and to hold a thread, with a slight weight attached to it, at arm's length, between him and . . . [the] water pitcher . . . and he will at once see all the perpendicular lines he desires, drawn, as it were, against the pitcher by the thread. They will show him the relative variations of all the curvatures of the outline as distinctly as if drawn on paper, and as easy of imitation. He will not only have a guide in drawing the sweep of the outline correctly, but, also, in making the true proportions of the object. He will find the line *D* produced by the thread, drawn as it were, against the pitcher, touching its lip and greatest circumference; while *B* and *C*, in like manner, serve to show the relative proportion of the stand or base to the neck. *A*, corresponding to *D*, gives him something to go by, in producing the general form with relative regularity and marks to variation, first seen where the handle begins.<sup>13</sup>

Once all the straight lines were ascertained, the student then drew the harmonious sweeping curves of the pitcher with the assurance that he had captured the proper proportions and correct degrees of curvature.

The crusaders often described their drawing system as making “maps” of objects. One author even noted that the “outline of a leaf, is a map, as truly as the outline of a county or a state.”<sup>14</sup> Rembrandt Peale and others, in fact, included lessons on cartography which not only showed the utility of the

manuals, but helped to clarify in the student's mind the “correct” approach to drawing.<sup>15</sup>

This preoccupation with linear characteristics permeated lessons on landscape as well as on the animal and human form. The “foundation of every branch of [drawing]” wrote John T. Bowen in 1839, “is correctness of outline.” Without this, “the finest coloring and most laborious finishing will fail to convey the true character of the object to be represented.”<sup>16</sup> Like geometrical figures, trees, leaves, heads, legs, and torsos were drawn with definite lines and with smooth, calculated “harmonious” curves. The same curve was often used to draw a woman's breast, the base of a wine glass, and the trunk of a tree. Authors of the landscape drawing manuals were insistent that students “begin with those great lines which bound the principal masses, and from these to proceed to the smaller ones.”<sup>17</sup> When John H. B. Latrobe gave to his readers formulas for each landscape depicted in *Lucas' Progressive Drawing Book*, he spoke in terms of “lines” (Figure 23).

The learner should commence the copy of this plate with the line where the foreground and river meet:—then the shore of West Point; then the shores of the headlands beyond; then the

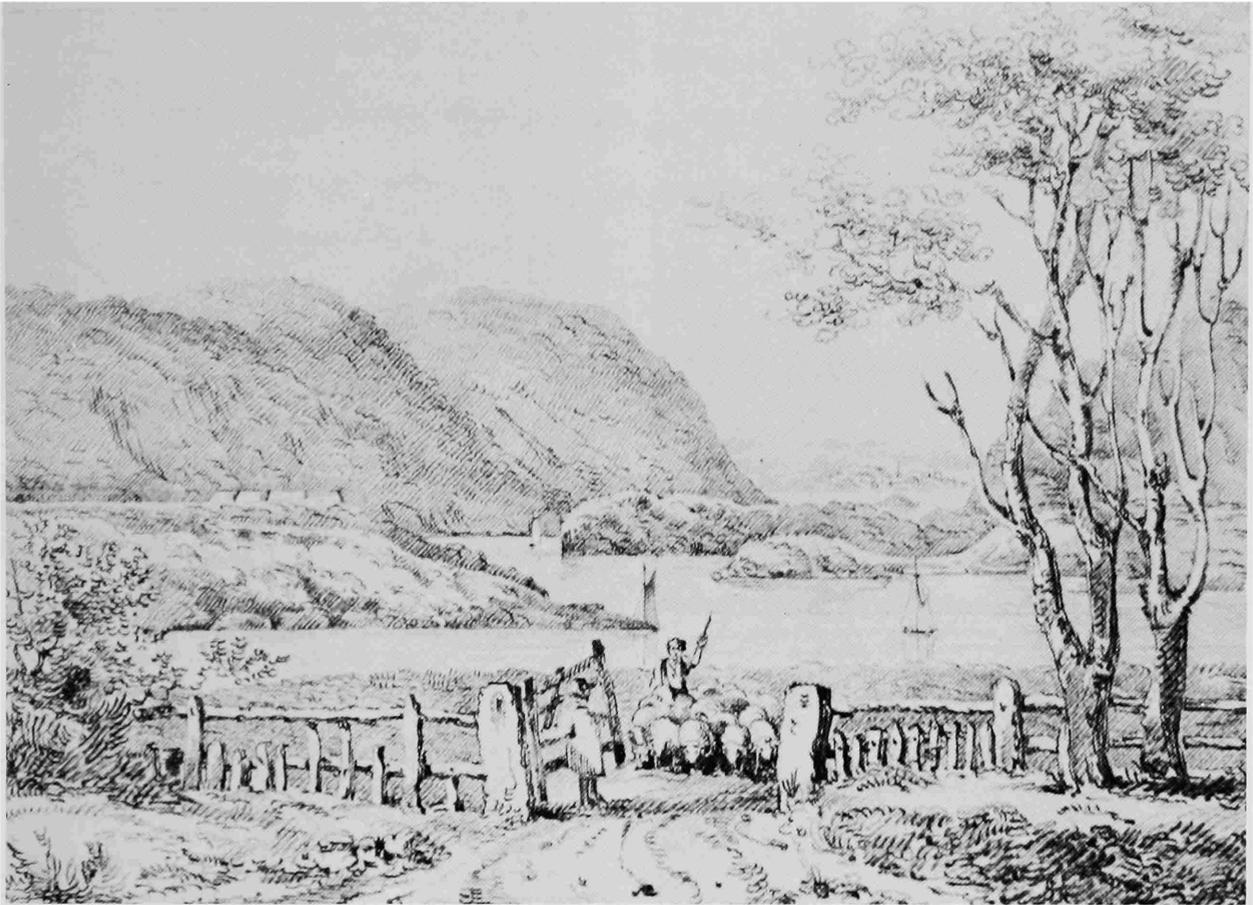


FIGURE 23.—“West Point from the East Bank of the Hudson” by John H. B. Latrobe,  
*Lucas' Progressive Drawing Book*, plate IX (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS).

piece of the base of the mountain, which is interrupted by the sail of the sloop; then the shore at Newburgh, and, having obtained these correctly, proceed with the outlines of the different parts. When he has completed the outlines of the middle ground and distance, and marked the principal masses into which these are divided, he should carefully draw the outline of the foreground.<sup>18</sup>

This type of instruction was standard for all the drawing books. Fessenden Nott Otis, in his *Studies of Animals*, followed the same procedure plotted out by Latrobe. A mule's hooves, legs, or head could be drawn with similar formulas (Figures 24–26).

... [D]raw, as lightly as possible, the left-hand line of the first example on Plate 1st, beginning at the top. By erecting a perpendicular from the point of the hoof, you will be able to see how much it varies from a straight line, and the difficulty of obtaining the true position will be greatly lessened. After forming this line to your satisfaction, draw the line of the op-

posite side, noticing carefully its relations with the first drawn, and complete your outline at the right-hand lower part of the hoof. Draw in carefully the touches which indicate the depressions and prominences; and having completed the outline, compare it critically with the copy, and correct all the faults you can discern. Then, with a sharp No. 2, retouch your sketch; put in the dark touches with care, until you have completed a correct copy of the original. Treat the succeeding examples of Plate 1st in like manner. —In Plate 2nd, the perpendiculars drawn through the exercises will aid in their situation and proportions. Study closely the lines which produce the shading. Their direction, and the manner in which they cross each other, should be carefully noted.

Plate 3d. —The directions for outlining No. 1 apply equally in this as well as in the succeeding examples...<sup>19</sup>

Rembrandt Peale expressed his ardent faith in the controlled line by providing a sure-fire technique for drawing the human hand (Figure 27).

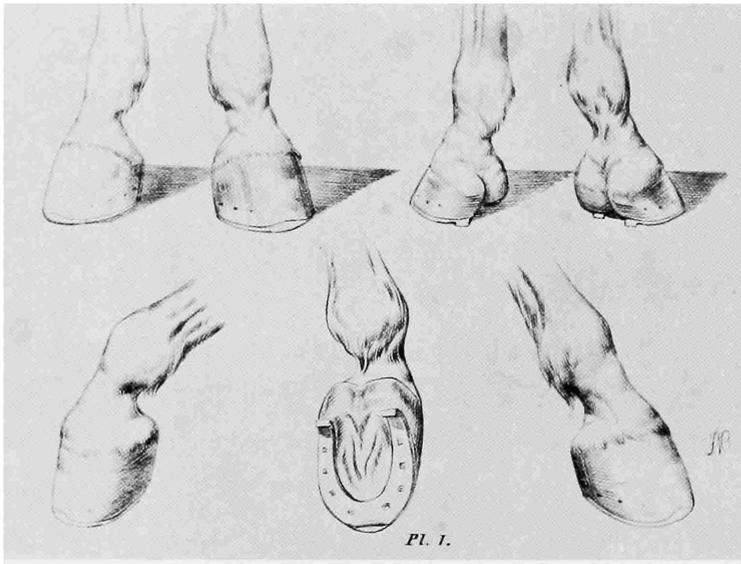


FIGURE 24.—Hooves by Fessenden Nott Otis, *Studies of Animals* (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).

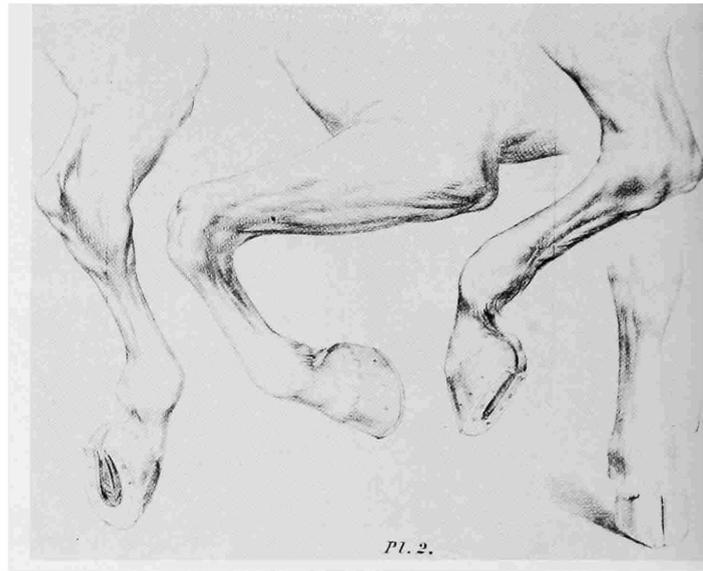


FIGURE 25.—Legs of horses by Fessenden Nott Otis, *Studies of Animals* (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).

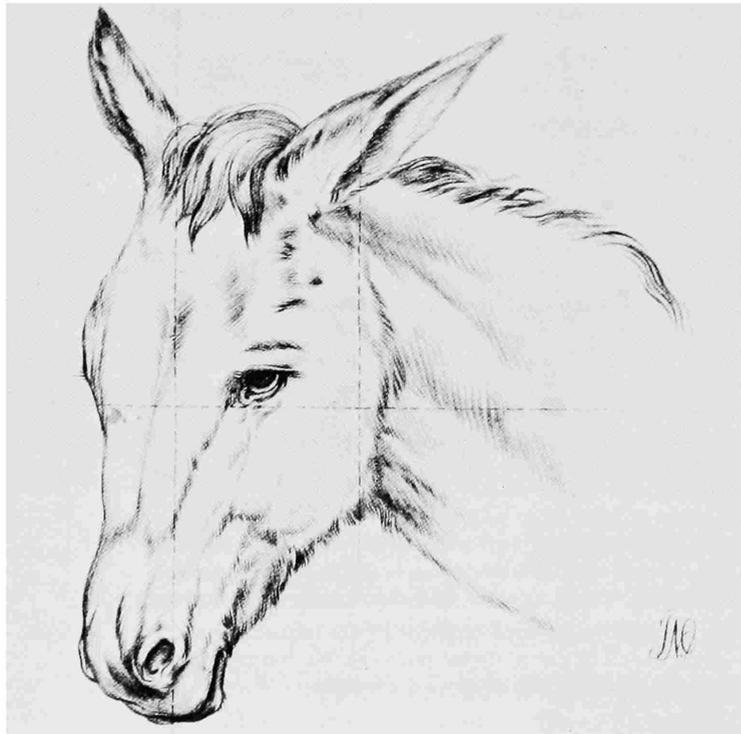


FIGURE 26.—Head of a horse by Fessenden Nott Otis, *Studies of Animals* (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).

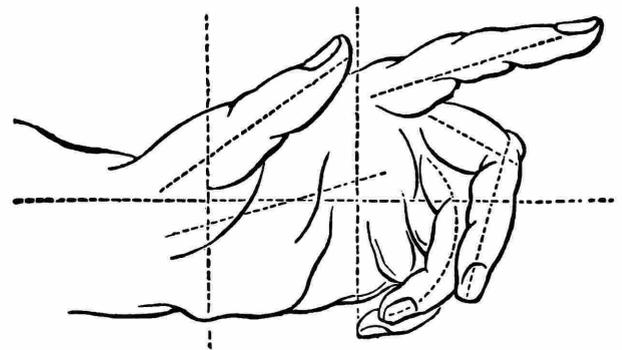


FIGURE 27.—“Complex Forms: The Hand” by Rembrandt Peale, *Graphics* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

(Continued from p. 35)

Complex figures only require a repetition of the rules which relate to general proportions, extending their application to minute parts. The horizontal and perpendicular lines which cross the above hand, will go far in assisting the copyist; but if to these guides be added those afforded by the oblique lines, to mark the direction of the quantities, he not only obtains other angles to govern him, but lines by which to compute the nature of the curves on either side of them. In every effort of drawing, it is essential to make frequent use of the perpendicular and horizontal comparisons,—as in the figure before us, a perpendicular line being supposed to rise from the point of the little finger, will be found to approach the thumb; and a horizontal line passing from the upper extremity of the fore-finger will be a little above the point of the thumb.

This formula could not fail, Peale insisted: "If every part of a drawing be thus tested by means of perpendicular and horizontal lines, parallels of direction and curvature of bows, with the true angles of their chords,—it is *impossible* that it should be incorrect."<sup>20</sup>

The human form did not escape this ABC approach. The crusaders tackled the intricacies of the body in two stages. First, as with drawing landscapes and animals, students used lines to draw elementary figures following the same method which Peale had outlined for the human hand. They were discouraged from learning rules of proportion or measurement. Chapman mastered this technique with the following formula (Figure 28):

... a perpendicular line, drawn from the upper lip, would intersect the point where the instep joins the leg; and, having

decided upon the height of the figure, he has already a certain basis, and starting points. Next, observe well the relation of the parts, proportions, and character of the general contour of the figure to this imaginary perpendicular line. The drapery takes one continued sweep, slightly modulated, by the form of the figure, from the heel to the left shoulder; which line, if farther extended, would touch the outline of the forehead, intersecting the assumed perpendicular line on the nostril: this gives, also the direction of the head. The lines of the back and shoulders, those of the left leg, and the more massive proportions of the figure, are, in like manner, to be ascertained, drawn, and verified. . . . The hands and arms, the most difficult parts of the figure, are yet to be drawn. It will be perceived, that the lower point of the union of the right hand . . . with the wrist, is on a level with the top of the head; and that the corresponding point of the left hand is on a level with the nostril. The distance of the hands from the head are next to be ascertained; which may be done by comparison with the parts and proportions already decided upon, and by the imaginary extension of such certain lines, already drawn, as may most readily direct to the desired purpose. For example: if the

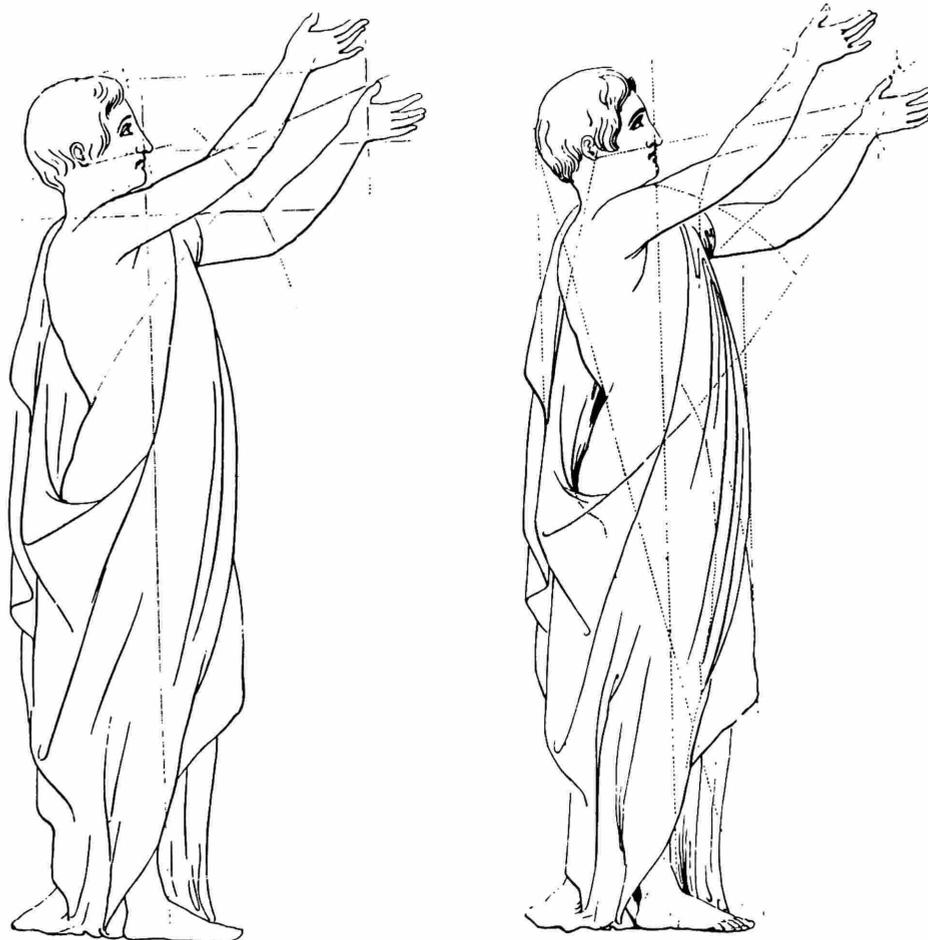


FIGURE 28.—The human figure in outline by John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

outline of the hip were extended upward, it would strike the outline of the right arm at the elbow, and continue with it to the wrist—which has been already decided upon, as being on a level with the top of the head. Thus the position of the right hand is ascertained; which may be farther verified, by the method of comparison, and studying its relation to other parts. The true position of the right hand, once secured, those of the left hand, the arms, etc., may be easily obtained; and, having completed the *general* contour of the figure, but little difficulty will be encountered in the delineation of the parts and details. The position of the head having been already ascertained, draw the features in harmony with it . . .; and thus proceed with the hands, feet, and other details.<sup>21</sup>

Chapman's drawings show that this style led to "outline" figures, which lacked both life and expression. As an exercise in sketching, however, it prepared students for the second plateau: drawing ideal types.

Ideal figure types were composed of the controlled line, the harmonious curve, and the standard geometric shapes. Students, now, however, had to introduce rules of proportion into their work. As in earlier lessons, the crusaders provided set rules and formulas which guaranteed success.

Whether doing a landscape, a water glass, or the human form, a student was taught to look for the "basic" composition. When he drew a tree, for example, he was not to draw a particular tree with all its "irregularities," but somehow to see in that single tree the generic tree. This concept of beauty called for a knowledge of generalizing types. In *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, John Rubens Smith explained why these types were necessary. He noted that all the "objects herein are drawn upon certain rules of proportion, not thereby insisting that we are all cast in one mould, but we may have some fixed rule to go by."<sup>22</sup> He emphasized that the beginner should follow the rules or formulas for every object. For example, when drawing either the male or female trunk, the student was instructed to bear in mind "that all bodies reckoning from the pit of the throat to the bottom of the trunk, are estimated as three faces lengths."<sup>23</sup>

Chapman mined Gerard DeLairesse's two-volume treatise, *Le Grand Livre Des Peintres, ou L'Art De La Peinture* (1787) for the "true" rules of human proportion (Figure 29). Although his drawings simplified DeLairesse's conception, they surely caught the spirit of the French master. Chapman gave these rules (Figure 30):

Taking *seven and a half heads*, as the average proportion in the height of a well-formed man, and dividing each head into

*four parts*, will necessarily give *thirty parts* of the whole figure. *Three parts* make up the length of the visage . . .—consequently, *ten faces* will be the measure of the Figure: and thus its proportions, by that scale:—

- 1 FACE from the crown of the head to the nostrils.
  - 1 from the nostrils to the extremity of the throat, or hollow between the collar-bones.
  - 1 from that point to the bottom of the breast.
  - 2 to the bottom of the trunk, which is one half the whole height, or centre of the figure.
  - 2 to the upper part of the knee.
  - 1/2 or 1 1/2 parts, is contained in the knee.
  - 2 from the lower part of the knee to the inner ankle.
  - 1/2 or 1 1/2 parts, thence to the sole of the foot: — making
- 10 faces to the figure.

The Quarter Divisions of the figure are at—

- I. The arm pits
- II. The bottom of the trunk
- III. The knees
- IV. The sole of the foot.

When a well-formed man extends his arms to their utmost stretch, the measure, from their extremities, equals his height.

The foot is generally considered as equal to one-sixth part of the height of the figure; but this measure is excessive.

The longest toe is equal to the length of the nose.

The hand is the length of the face.

Twice the breadth of the hand gives its length.

The breadth of the hand is equal to that of the foot.

The thumb is one nose in length.

Apparently taking this cue from Chapman, Jehu Brainerd made DeLairesse's rules even simpler:

The nose is equal to one-fourth of the head, or one-third of the face.

The hand is equal to the length of the face.

The breadth of the hand is equal to half its length.

The foot is about one head in length, and as broad as the hand.

The longest toe, the thumb and the nose are of equal lengths.

If a man extends his arms at full length, the distance between the tips of the fingers will equal his height.<sup>24</sup>

These proportions did not come from clinical studies, but from the standard forms of "antique statues," the source of ideal truth. Chapman wrote:

The Farnese Hercules is, in height, supposing the figure erect, seven heads, three parts, and seven minutes (twelve minutes are allowed to a part); the Antinous of the Vatican, seven heads and two parts; the Laocoon, seven heads, two parts, and three minutes; the Dying Gladiator of the Capitol, eight heads; the Apollo Belvidere, seven heads, three parts, and six minutes; the Venus de Medici, seven heads and three parts; and the Grecian Shepherdess, at Naples, seven heads, three parts, and six minutes.<sup>25</sup>

Not only the whole human body, but each of its parts had an ideal form as well. John Gadsby Chapman believed so strongly in types that he lamented

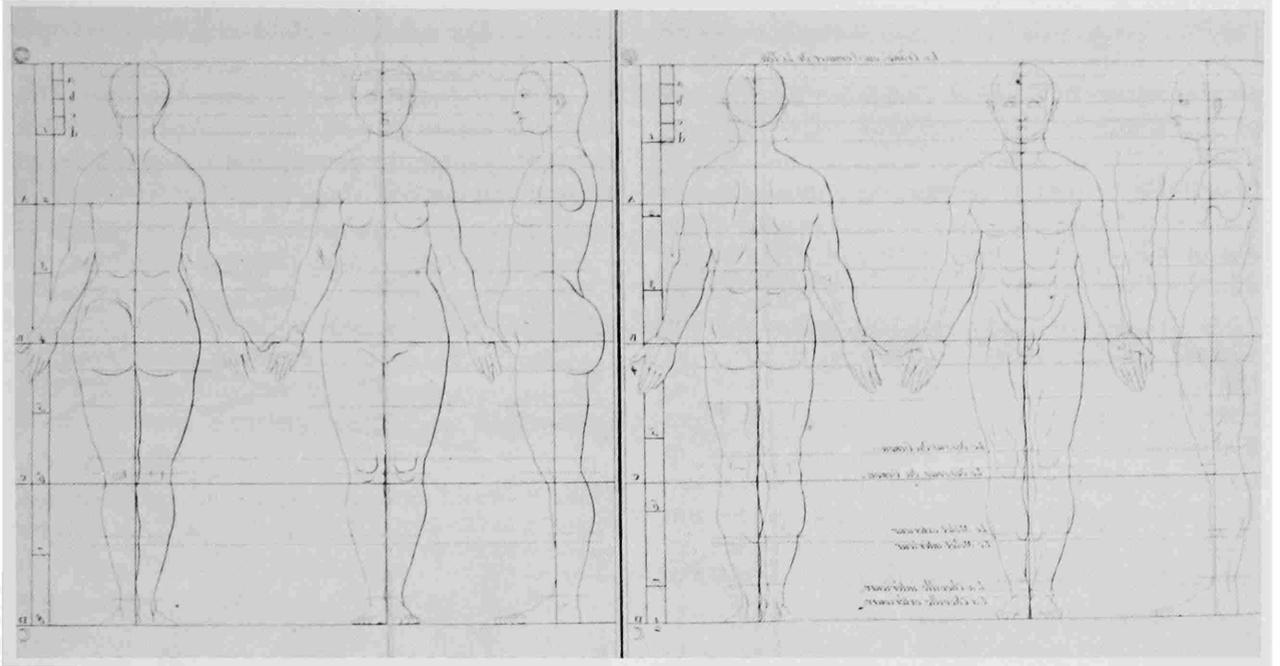


FIGURE 29.—Human figure proportions by Gerard de Lairese, *Le Grand Livre des peintres, ou l'art de la peinture* (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS).

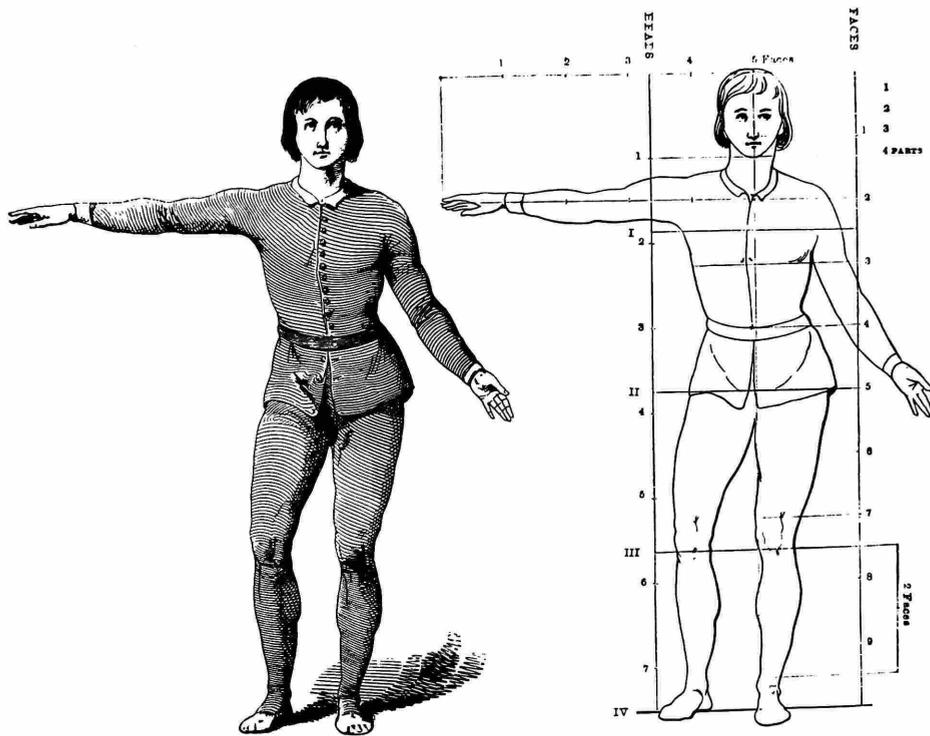


FIGURE 30.—The human figure in proportions by John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

the fact that a "well-formed foot is rarely met with . . . in our day." After viewing the perfect limbs of ancient statues in Rome he concluded that the feet of nineteenth-century Americans were tragically distorted "by the fashion of our shoes and boots." The "little toe, and its neighbor, in a shoe-deformed foot," complained Chapman, ". . . are usually thrust out of the way altogether, as if considered super-numerary and useless, while all the work is thrown upon the great toe, although that, too, is scarcely allowed working-room, in its prison-house of leather." He discouraged students from studying real feet and encouraged them to find models "from the antique" (Figure 31). Plaster casts would, in Chapman's words, "impress upon him [the student] the true and perfect form of the foot; for he will rarely meet with it, in nature, and yet these very standards of perfection are derived from nature."<sup>26</sup>

The same was said for arms and legs, and necks and heads. In a typical spurt of indignation, John Rubens Smith wrote:

How a head is to be drawn without a knowledge of the proportions and principles that regulate its component parts is an inquiry too absurd to dwell upon, and the fact that such practices extend into landscape, perspective and natural history, is a lamentable instance in the inroads of fortune and folly on the realms of propriety and good taste, an evil that has no remedy but in the extension of a duly organized state academy, like a medical college, that shall be able to clear our profession from quacks and pretenders, or at least enable the public to discriminate.<sup>27</sup>

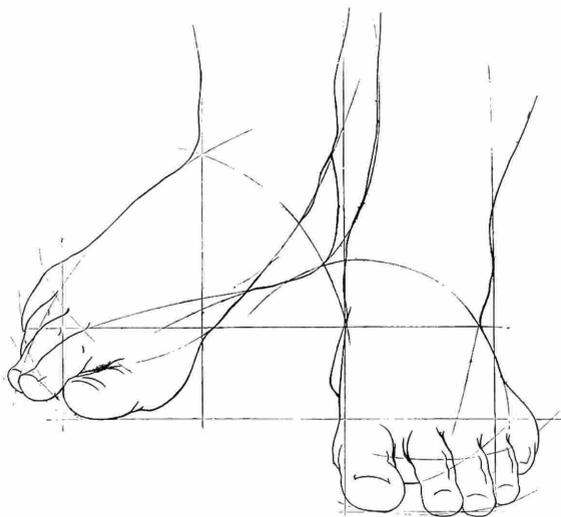


FIGURE 31.—Feet by Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

Benjamin Coe's *Drawing Book of Trees* (1841) presented formulas for familiar vegetation. To draw the oak, chestnut, and maple trees, the marks illustrated in Figure 32 were most appropriate.<sup>28</sup> When doing the poplar, the pencil strokes were to be more vertical (Figure 33).

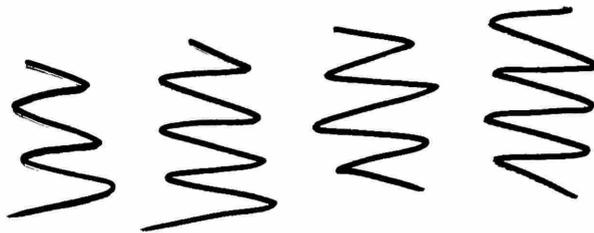


FIGURE 32.—Pencil strokes for oak, chestnut, and maple trees, copied from Benjamin H. Coe, *Drawing Book of Trees* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

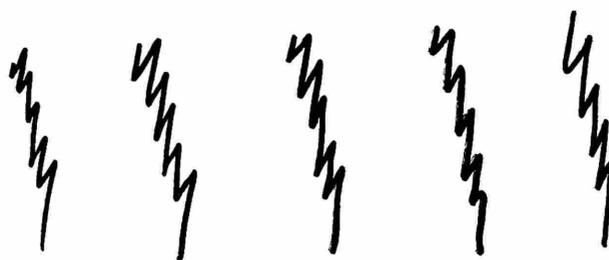


FIGURE 33.—Pencil strokes for the poplar tree, copied from Benjamin H. Coe, *Drawing Book of Trees* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

Fessenden Nott Otis, in his *Easy Lessons in Landscape*, also presented formulas for the trees and plants found in America. He condemned any drawing system which encouraged slavish copying, yet he insisted that "every variety of foliage, may be indicated by the same free zigzag movement with judicious modifications of its form and arrangement." His rules of proportion and cross-hatching for the birch, oak, walnut, and maple trees were billed as a "complete and easy guide to the fields of Nature." The Otis manual was a set of simple types to which nature was made to conform.<sup>29</sup>

The ideal types were designed to give the student a "correct and discriminating eye, and you obtain the character and proportion of your object on the principle that a *specific variation* from the given rule constitutes individuality, or if you please, a deviation from a fixed proportion produces a *specific character*."<sup>30</sup> It is curious, however, that when

the manuals illustrated examples of “specific character,” the general forms seemed to dominate. Figure 34 from John Rubens Smith’s *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure* supposedly demonstrated 12 specific examples of “tranquil expression and attitude.” But Smith’s practice in generalization is overwhelming. This was because the generic qualities received the strongest emphasis in every illustration and also, because he, and many other art instructors, developed “sure-fire” types for indicating specific characteristics. Smith, for example, gathered from European manuals 23 different types of eyes which expressed a variety of emotions (Figure 35). They included:

- I) By showing the white of the ball over the pupil and looking straight forward with raised eye brow, denotes the merry surprise of childhood turning to fear its tries to hide
- K) Astonishment at what moves the mind unpleasantly
- L) Anger with the cause present
- M) Contempt or hatred askance at its object
- N) Content of mind or tranquility
- O) Soft and languid upraised expressions, indicate esteem, affection or love
- P) Mild, down looking, and unexcited, as if looking on vacancy, serve for diffidence, modesty or resignation
- Q) That inquiring look of assurance that stares at its object with bad intent
- R) Bodily pain with gloomy presages
- S) Acute pain or spasms when the mind cannot control action
- T) Grief or grievous reflections
- V) Same in another view.<sup>31</sup>

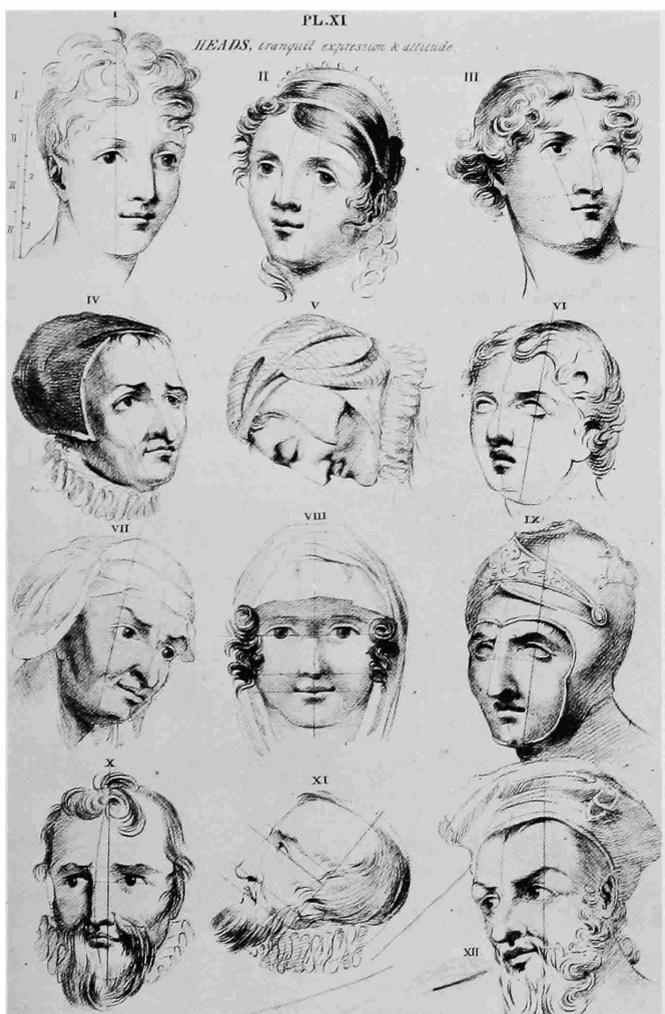


FIGURE 34.—“Heads: Tranquil Expression and Attitude” by John Rubens Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, plate XI (NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY).

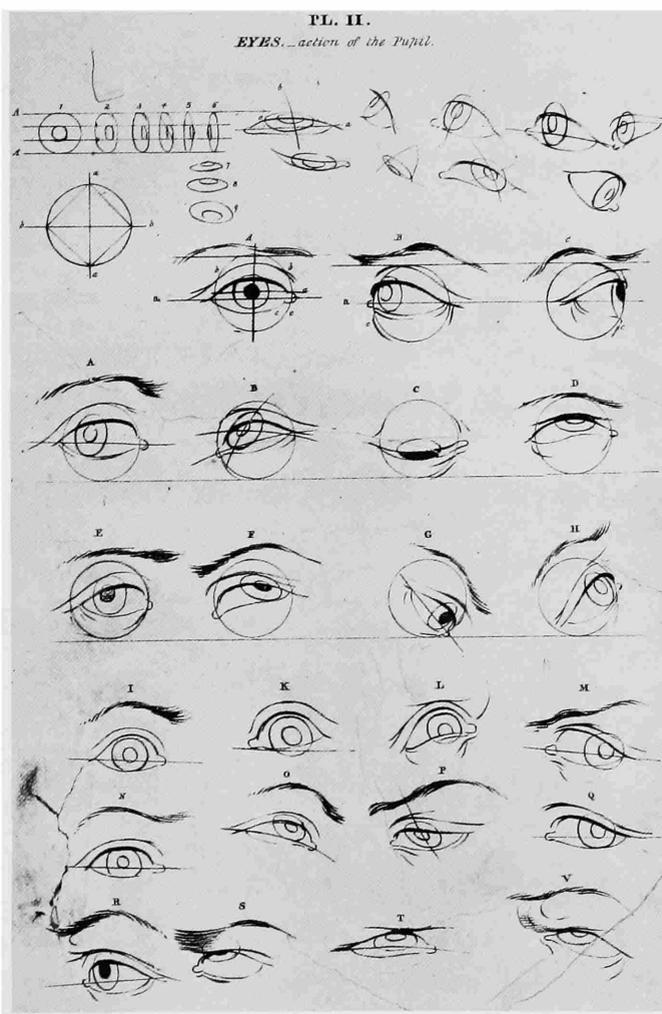


FIGURE 35.—“Eyes: Action of the Pupil” by John Rubens Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, plate II (NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY).

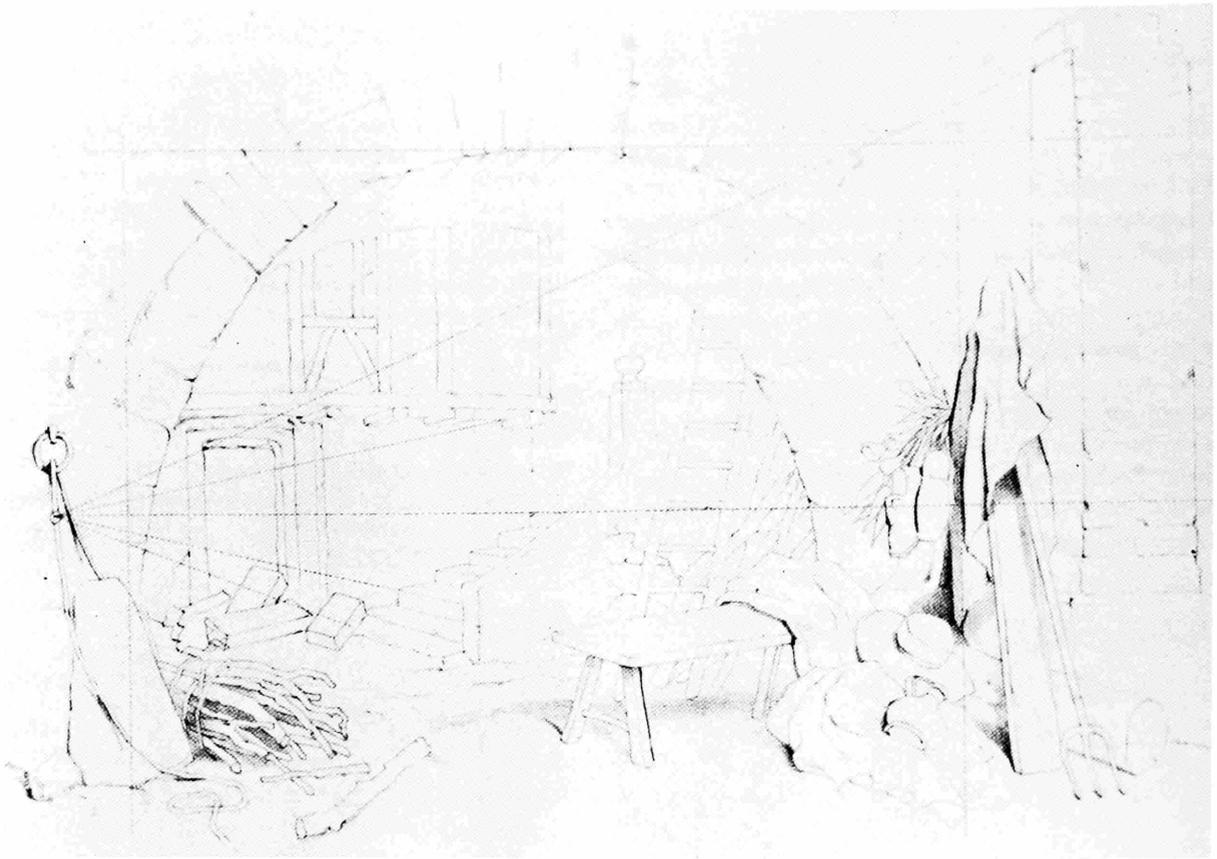
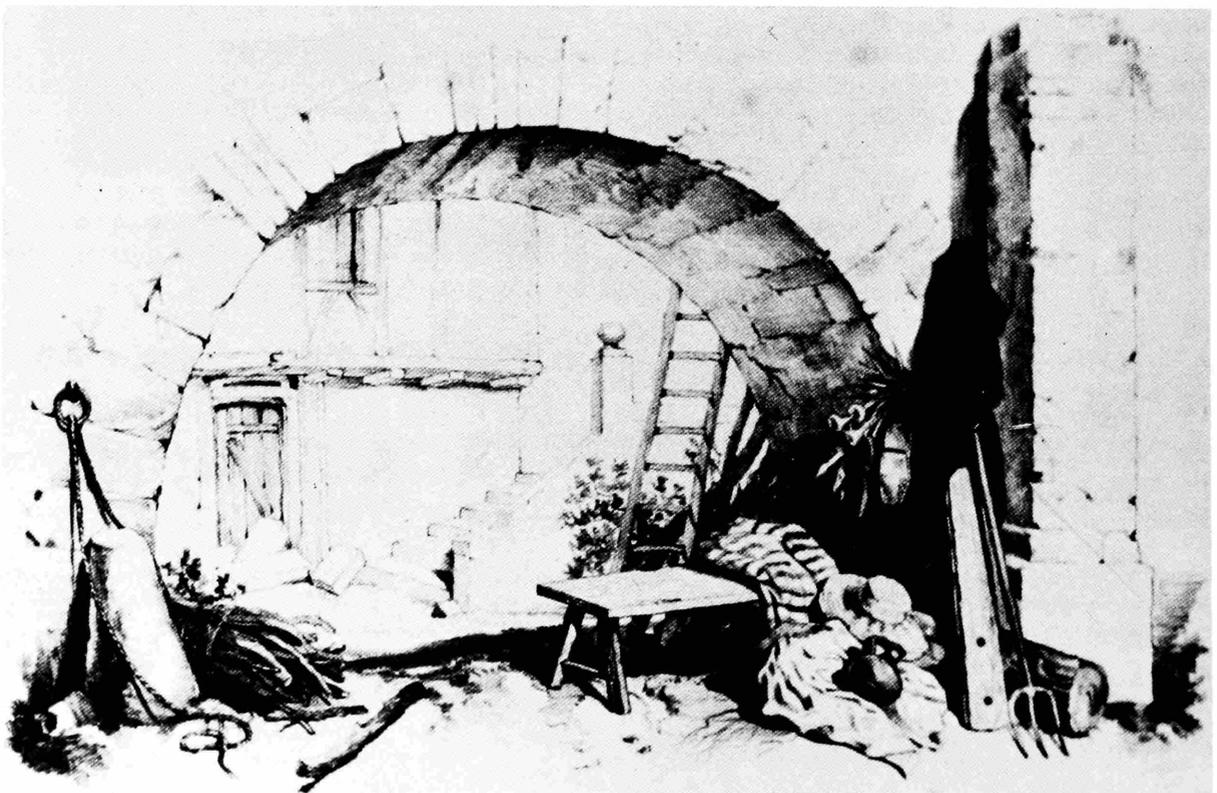


FIGURE 36.—A study in perspective and proportion by C. Kuchel, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, plate 7 (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).

FIGURE 37.—A finished composition, C. Kuchel, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, plate 8 (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).



Whether speaking of an object as mysterious as the human eye or as straightforward as a carpenter's hammer, ideal types, drawn in sharp and almost brittle outlines, became the trademark of the democratic art. The ideal chair, the ideal hammer, the perfect view, the most effective still life, etc., etc., were repeated continually in the seemingly endless stream of drawing books. With practice, most students could scratch their way to this second level of achievement—at least that's what the extant drawing books indicate by their tired pencilings. The exercises were clear, the rules simple, and the ABC approach guaranteed some modicum of success. Even the tricky problems of shading and chiaroscuro did not depress the buoyant optimism. The *Classical Drawing Book* observed: "It is the artful management of light and shade, that gives the appearance of substance, roundness and distance, to whatever bodies are represented by drawing."<sup>32</sup> Many manuals, like C. Kuchel's *The Columbian Drawing Book*, gave rules for shading. The "Workshop" (Figure 36) illustrated how to "block out" a pic-

ture with proper perspective and proportions. Once this was completed, the drawing was given "substance" by shading. Figure 37 from C. Kuchel's manual showed how the finished product was to appear. Curiously enough, Kuchel's work contained elementary instructions in shading techniques, but failed to explain how to handle drapery. An "intermediate" student who tried his hand at the clothes on the right might easily have given up in vain. Not every illustration in Kuchel's manual was this difficult, however. Elementary exercises, like the "Water Well" (Figure 38), illustrated the principles of shading, but avoided the complexities of perspective and the difficulties of drawing drapery.

A simpler, step-by-step formula for successful drawing and shading was presented by Benjamin H. Coe in his *Drawing Book of Trees* (1841):<sup>33</sup>

- 1st. Sketch the trunk and limbs. It is usually best to begin at the top, for it is desirable to see your drawing as it proceeds.
- 2nd. Go round all the light parts, and be careful to keep them large enough.
- 3rd. Make the shades round the lights.
- 4th. Touch round the edges.

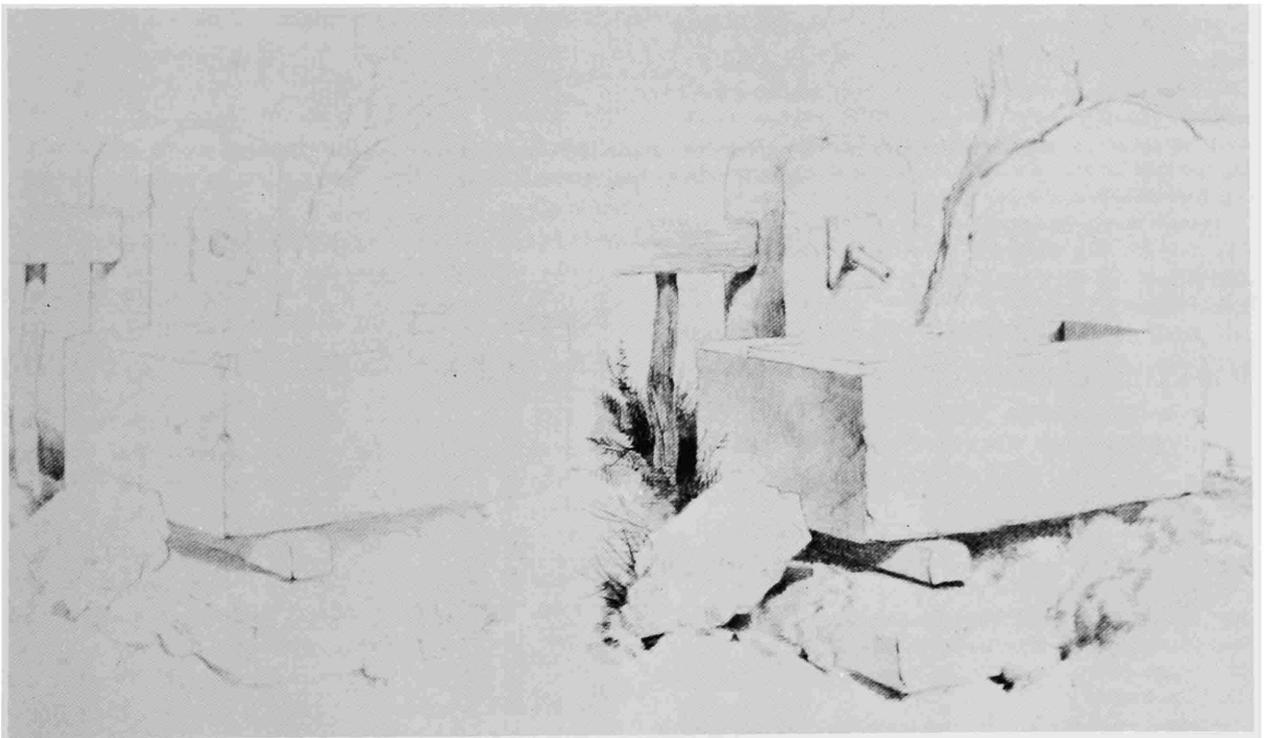


FIGURE 38.—Water well by C. Kuchel, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, plate 1 (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).



FIGURE 39.—Studies in drawing trees by Benjamin H. Coe, *Drawing Book of Trees*, plate 1  
(THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).

5th. Divide the large lights into smaller masses, and shade round them.

6th. Shade the limbs and trunk.

If this formula was too general, Coe also provided a shade-by-letter system (Figure 39):

1st. Draw the limb H.

2nd. Draw the light with a well defined touch leaving the edge quite jagged and irregular, I.

3rd. Add the shades, making them all in one direction, and darker as you approach the light mass. Touch up with care precisely to the jagged line that surrounds the light, K.

4th. Put the touch round the edge resembling a figure 3, L.

5th. Divide the light into smaller masses, M.

6th. Shade faintly around these small masses of light, and shade the branch, N.

You cannot study this process with too much care, as you must take this same method in shading most trees.<sup>34</sup>

Coe insisted that one should not make a fetish of his

instructions "but the general rules in this book are important, and if you carefully adhere to them . . . you will find no difficulty in finishing trees with neatness."<sup>35</sup>

The same types of formulas were repeated time and again. While the authors agreed that shading improved a drawing, they did not see the forms of objects in terms of light or shadow. Lines and edges were the essence of form. This theory countered the advanced thinking of the 1830–1860 period; nevertheless, the dramatic effects in landscape, which so many Americans loved, were the product of these rules. As Charles Davies insisted in *A Treatise on Shades and Shadows*: ". . . which parts are to be darkened, and which parts are to be made light in a drawing . . . is certainly a difficult problem unless it be solved on scientific principles."<sup>36</sup>

## Can Anyone Learn to Draw?

THE EARLY LESSONS in the American manuals omitted any mention of two crucial facts: seldom did an artist paint his figures standing perfectly erect and seldom did he place all his figures on the same plane. Controlled lines, harmonious curves, and ideal types did not add up to art. A work of art, in the crusaders' schema, had to be drawn in perspective, and, once again, they resorted to "workable" formulas.

Rufus Porter, the New England mural painter and founding editor of the *Scientific American* ("a family paper" which, among other things, promised to "convey more useful intelligence . . . than ten times its cost in schooling"), was in its early years an avid promoter of art for the people. In the 29 May 1847 issue, Porter advised his readers that when doing landscapes they should not be troubled by the intricacies of perspective: "The learner has only to observe the relative proportion and position which one object bears to another. For example: If three trees stand at different distances, the first being 20 feet, the second 40, and the third 60 feet from the artist, then the height of the first will appear double to that of the second, and equal to three of that of the third. . . ." If students were not trained in measuring distances, Porter even instructed them on how to use a specially designed sextant adapted for the use of artists by a Mr. J. Emery of Bucksport, Maine!<sup>1</sup>

Most art crusaders disapproved of Porter's naive prescriptions. They insisted that a solid knowledge of the laws of perspective was essential to any serious student. And few authors saw any shortcuts. Perspective, said John Gadsby Chapman, is "an art, without which the draughtsman must forever wander in uncertainty and error, while in its knowledge he secures a faithful and unerring guide."<sup>2</sup> Chapman tried desperately to make this complex science easy to learn. He boiled it down to five "important and elementary principles" and provided a useful illustration (Figure 40):

- I. The Point of Sight must be in the centre of the perspective picture.

- II. All lines parallel to an imaginary line drawn from the eye of the observer to the Point of Sight, must terminate or vanish in that point.
- III. The Line of the Horizon must necessarily rise or descend with the position of the eye, and consequently with the Point of Sight.
- IV. The Base or Ground Line of the picture and all others parallel with it, must be parallel with the Line of the Horizon.
- V. The Diagonal of the Square, perspectively represented, directs to a point on the Line of the Horizon—the distance from which point to the Point of Sight represents the true distance of the eye of the observer from the picture.<sup>3</sup>

In 43 pages he explained these principles and applied them to specific examples. Two of Joseph Rope's works, *Linear Perspective* and *Practical Perspective*, were even shorter and less complex. He saw two essential rules: (1) "the method of determining the vanishing points of lines," and (2) "finding points upon vanishing lines which . . . give the required figure."<sup>4</sup> Stairs were simple (Figure 41):

Draw the front of the first step, *A*, and set off its width on the ground line, and rule to *R* for its perspective width. Rule from *a* and *b* to *S*. The line, *o u*, gives the height of the first step at the distance *o*, and likewise the height of the second step, by applying it from *u* to *n*. A repetition of the same method would give the height and width of each succeeding step. But an easier way [is] to draw a line from *a* through *n* to the prime vertical, and from *b* through *u* to the same point. These lines will define the inner and outer angles of the steps for the entire flight. From *n*, draw again to *S*, which is the vanishing point for all the vanishing lines.<sup>5</sup>

Ropes encouraged more advanced students to try a complete scene (Figure 42):

Begin leisurely, by choosing the most attractive point of view. Determine how much of the scene to inclose, and the scale or size to which to reduce it. Draw lightly the H. and P.V. lines, as standards, in relation to which all the lines of the scene are to be arranged.

If no artificial structures are included, there is little opportunity for the direct application of the rules of Perspective; but the undulating lines of the landscape must be considered in relation to the planes to which they are nearest parallel, for these control their representation as much as though they were straight.

In sketching Lakes and Rivers, notice that under the law regulating the appearance of circles, the line of the distant shore may seem quite close to that of the nearer border. Be-

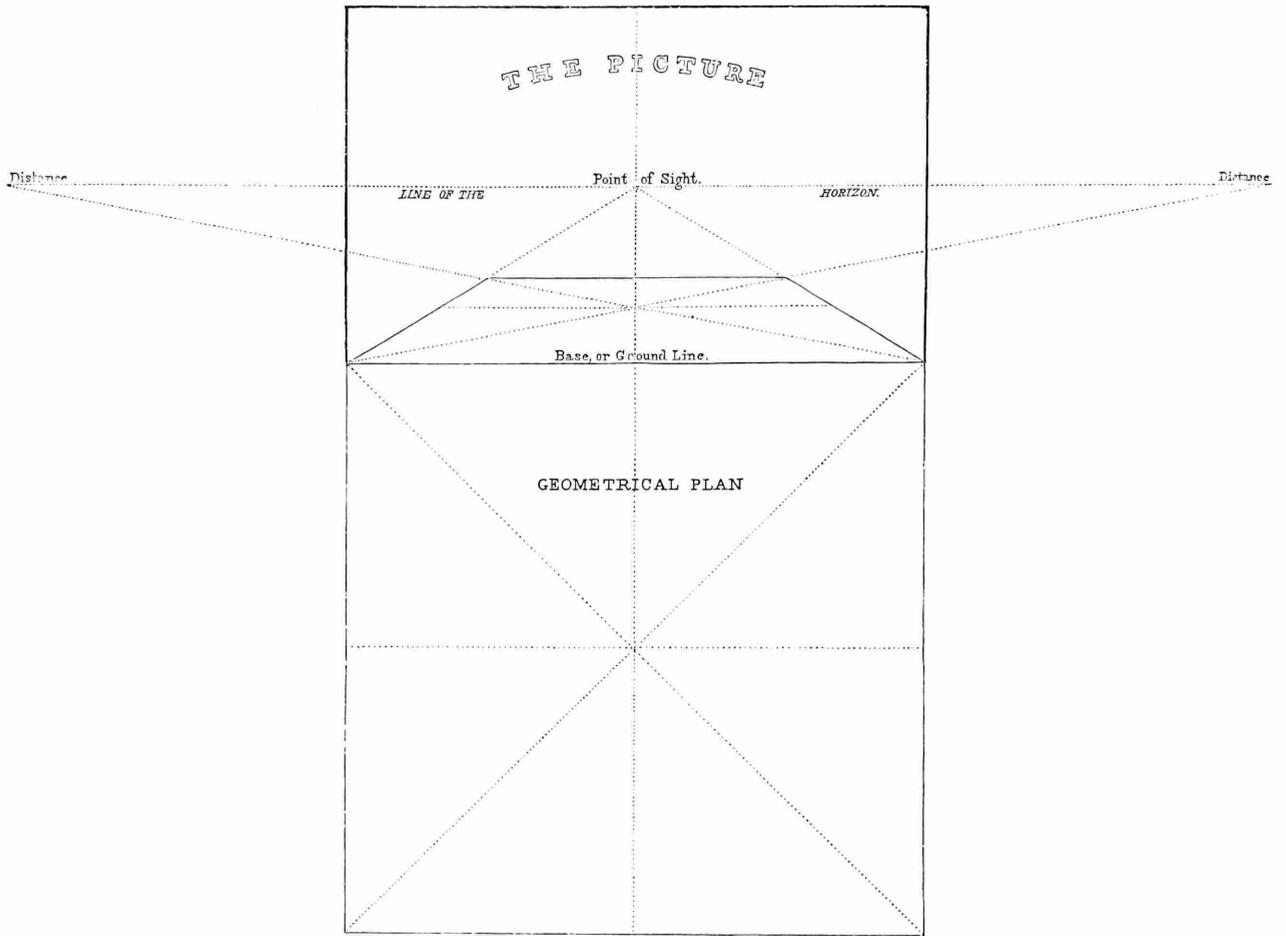


FIGURE 40.—Perspective formula and diagram by John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

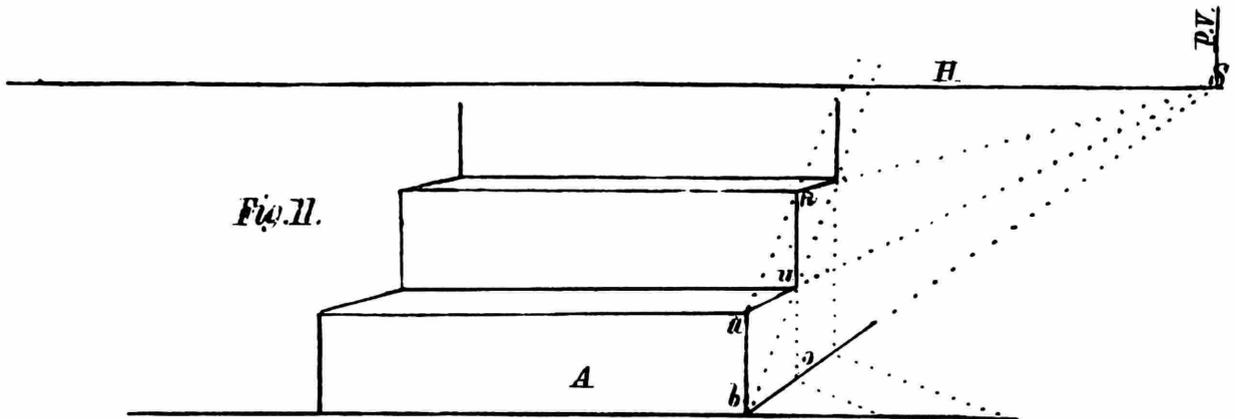


FIGURE 41.—Stairs by Joseph Ropes, *Practical Perspective* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).



FIGURE 42.—Perspective exercise from an elevation by Joseph Ropes, *Practical Perspective* (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

ginners are liable to err, by allowing their knowledge of the actual distance to interfere with the perspective appearance. . . .

If buildings are introduced, begin with some prominent line, parallel to the picture plane, and having found the vanishing and radial points, draw the principal vanishing lines, and find on them the perspective width for each side, if the view is oblique. When the larger dimensions are established, the more minute parts may be inserted, such as windows, doors, chimneys, etc. Where extreme accuracy is not required, many such things can be done by the eye, after the rules for doing them are known.

When buildings adjoin each other, those which are secondary can frequently be drawn by noticing how their lines cut those of the main building. . . . [T]he height of the roof of the distant barn can be given, by the intersection of its lines (the ridge and eaves) with the nearer building; and the height of the latter may be fixed by observing that a ruler held horizontally, a little lower than the eaves of the house, cuts its nearest peak. The tall tree by the barn is as high *apparently*, (for it must be recalled that these are perspective appearances) as the peak of the roof of the house.<sup>6</sup>

Perspective was also taught with a “draw by letter” system. W. B. Shattuck’s *The Columbian Drawing Book* illustrated principles which the author claimed

were “indispensable to the successful architect or engineer, and will be found very useful by the artist and student in drawing.”<sup>7</sup> Figure 43 is one example:

Fig. 1 represents the side of a house. To avoid complexity, but a single line of the cornice *dc*, is shown. Draw the horizon line, *ab*, of indefinite length, and upon it erect the perpendiculars, *ad*, *bc*; join *dc*. There are three windows of equal size to be represented. Suppose the space between each of the lines, *ad*, *bc*, and the windows nearest these lines to be five feet; the width of the windows three feet, and of the intervening spaces, four feet. Draw *de* at right angles to *ad*. With dividers, or a scale of equal parts, lay off these proportions upon *de*—that is, make the first space, *dg*, five-eighths of an inch; the second, *gh*, three-eighths; the third, *hi*, four-eighths; the fourth, *ij*, three-eighths; the fifth, *jk*, four-eighths; the sixth, *kl*, three-eighths; and the seventh, *le*, five-eighths. Instead of eighths—tenths, sixteenths, or fourths may be used. It will be seen at the conclusion, that the magnitude of the space does not affect the correctness of the result, if the proportions are preserved. From *e*, draw through *c*, the corner of the house, the line *lc*, and produce it until it touches the horizon line at *f*, which is sometimes called The Point of Distance. From *gh*, *ij*, *kl*, draw lines to *f*; from the points where these lines cross *dc*, draw indefinite perpendiculars toward *ab*, which will give the width of the windows and their perpendicular position.

Lay off their length, mn, upon ad, and draw lines toward the vanishing point, which will finish their outline.<sup>8</sup>

And for those who thought this method too naive, there were always the European authorities.<sup>9</sup> Jean Pierre Thenot's *Practical Perspective* (translated in 1834) and John Varley's *A Treatise on the Principles of Landscape Drawing* (1816–1821) were highly recommended. Varley seems to have been particularly influential. His treatise was published by Fielding Lucas, Jr., around 1820,<sup>10</sup> and he probably influenced the work of Rembrandt Peale.<sup>11</sup> Part III of *Lucas' Progressive Drawing Book* was simply a reprint of Varley, and works by this energetic Englishman appeared in American book catalogs until the Civil War.

Despite all the formulas and all the examples, "Perspective" was a major stumbling block on the road to a democratic art. One of the earliest American treatises on perspective was written by Simeon De Witt of Albany in 1813. Even at that early date

he saw the essential problem which would baffle the authors of popular manuals. People are reluctant, observed De Witt, to treat perspective "as an appendage to Mathematics." It is considered, he continued, "as belonging exclusively to the Drawing-Master . . . when, in fact, the Drawing-Master . . . may know nothing of its principles, and therefore cannot teach it."<sup>12</sup> The crusaders shied away from complex mathematical formulas. They supplied particular instructions for specific drawings, but they failed to arrive at any simple generalizations. Even the master teacher, John Rubens Smith, could not give a satisfactory solution. His *Easy Lessons in Perspective* are far from easy. And one can sympathize with a reviewer who commented that perspective is the "most difficult part of the art."<sup>13</sup> William Hogarth, whose satires enjoyed wide circulation in America, composed a witty picture in the 1750s which should have forewarned the crusaders. This plate (Figure 44) appeared in *Dr. Brook Taylor's*

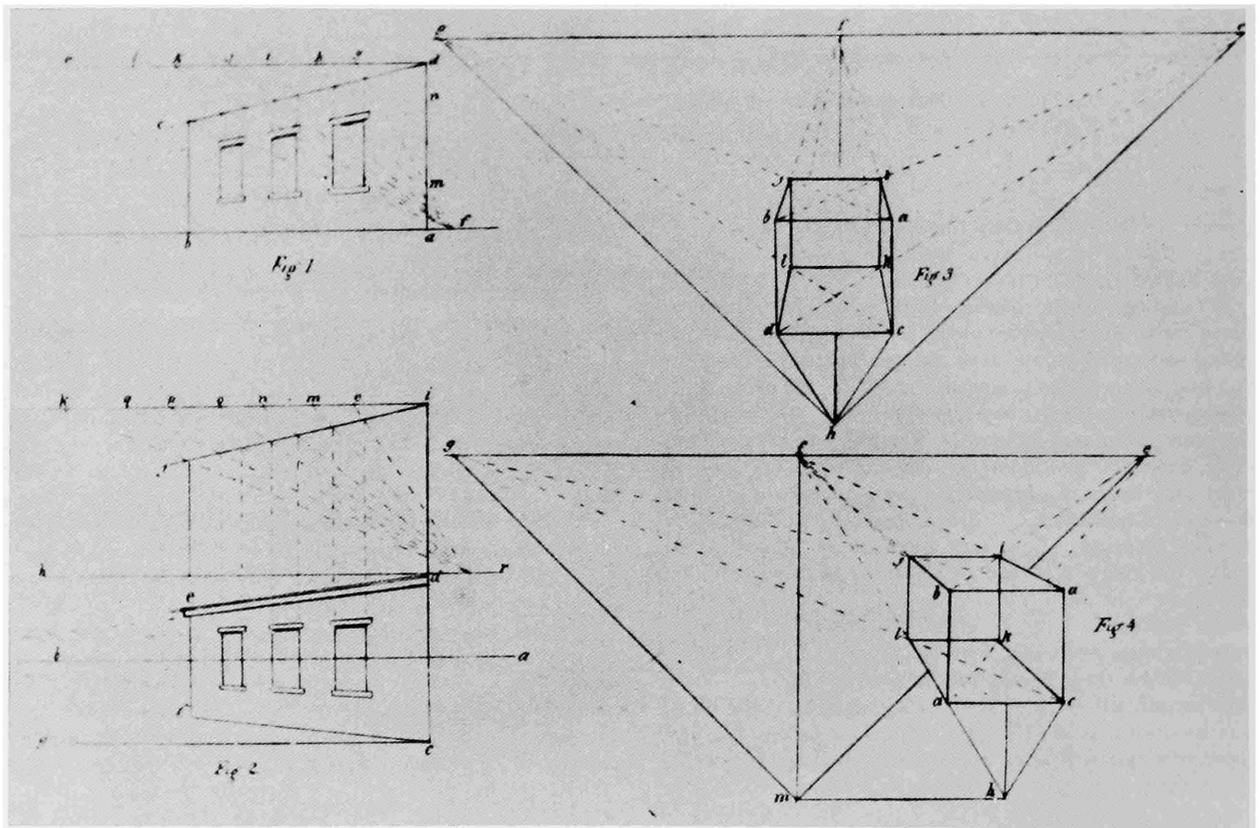


FIGURE 43.—Exercise for teaching perspective by William B. Shattuck, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, plate 1 (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).



*Whoever makes a DESIGN, without the Knowledge of PERSPECTIVE, will be liable to such Absurdities as are shewn in this Frontispiece.*

FIGURE 44.—Perspective frontispiece by William Hogarth, *Dr. Brook Taylor's Method of Perspective* (Ipswich, 1755, 2nd edition) (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS).

*Method of Perspective* by Joshua Kirby (second edition, 1755). "Whoever makes a Design without the Knowledge of Perspective," Hogarth warned, "will be liable to such Absurdities as are shown" here. Humorous, but true, Hogarth's illustration was no joke. Perspective was, indeed, a principal barrier to a democratic art.

The dilemma with "perspective," of course, was that it often negated the value of learning "ideal" proportions. Proportions for a seated or bending figure change in order to give the illusion of a "figure in space." Limbs are foreshortened or elongated, muscles reduced or enlarged. Each position and each figure required individual attention, defying generalizations. Lessons of perspective could not be placed on top of the lessons of controlled lines and ideal types. Perspective was not a separate entity or a simple building block. It required a thorough rethinking of earlier lessons and a readiness to discard sure-fire rules for stiff figures. It was both mathematical and intuitive. It was not democratic—it demanded skill and intelligence.

Perspective was not the only problem. Descriptive lines, ideal types, and rules for shading did not—in the crusaders' minds—divorce art from nature. At first glance, the drawing books appear contradictory. Some authors seemed to indicate that art was a literal copy of nature. Others emphasized that drawing was an expression of reason represented by symbols and forms. Does one draw a tree as it appears at a specific time and place, or does he follow a formula for the ideal tree? The art crusaders tried to embody both approaches in one code. They justified their types by insisting that they came from nature, the source of truth. Thomas Cole, the landscape painter of the 1840s, explained his use of types:

The Apollo, the Farnesian Hercules, the Venus de Medici, are as true as anything art has achieved. In the Apollo are embodied dignity, agility and grace; in the Hercules, force and masculine power; in the Venus, the excellence of feminine form, destitute in great measure of intellectual expression. These works are true, having their types in nature.<sup>14</sup>

Cole insisted that while no one woman looked precisely like the Venus de Medici, a study of all the most beautiful women would show the Venus to be a composite of all that is perfect in womanhood. The perfect oak tree, the perfect flower, the perfect hand, and the perfect foot that appeared in countless manuals were derived by this same selective process.

Even Fessenden Nott Otis, who taught his students to draw the perfect landscape, insisted that a student's work was to be judged by the following test: "If the paper were glass, or other transparent substance, we should be able to trace upon its surface the exact representation of the appearances seen through it, and thus obtain the true perspective outline of any object, without the possibility of error."<sup>15</sup> Art was to be a window to nature, precise yet better than nature herself. A writer in the *North American Review* noted in 1849:

Art is nature, but it is something more and better than nature,—as much better as the work of a creative mind is better than the work of accident. For the purpose of pictorial composition all natural effects are but accidents: and though sometimes we think we see them so perfect that art could add nothing to their excellence, yet every artist knows that nature never made a landscape from which something should not be taken away, or to which something should not be added, to present in its most perfect form the prevailing sentiment of the scene.<sup>16</sup>

Benjamin Coe was less philosophical and more concrete. In explaining the laws of chiaroscuro (or "Effect") in *A New Drawing Book of American Scenery* (1845), he noted:

To draw the shadows just as they appear in nature will not always make a pleasing picture. A thousand expedients must be resorted to in order to give a pictorial representation. The time of day, dark or light, rolling or horizontal clouds; dark or light sails, cattle, or figures, shadows thrown across the landscape by clouds, and many other objects that are liable to change, may be varied at pleasure in the drawing.<sup>17</sup>

A natural scene did not possess organic unity. The artist, by the proper rearrangement of forms and colors, gave it this timeless ingredient.

Unfortunately, the crusaders failed to discover useful generalizations for correct compositions. Chapman, in the final chapter of *The American Drawing Book*, admitted: "As to appropriateness of manner, or style of execution, in a picture . . . it is difficult to form a definite conclusion."<sup>18</sup> But he and his fellow crusaders did give numerous examples. Figures 45, 46, and 47 are from John T. Bowen's *The United States Drawing Book*. With Figure 45 Bowen explained that "when bold, strong trees are brought against a bright sky, a tree with lighter foliage is placed near to produce a harmony by gradation. Twisting the trunk of the tree so that the lower part shall be before and the top beyond the other tree gives variety." In the "Source of the Passaic" (Figure 46) he observed that the "fine sweeping lines here, and the contrast afforded in



FIGURE 45.—“Landscape with Water Falls” by John T. Bowen, *The United States Drawing Book*, plate 23 (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).

FIGURE 46.—“Source of the Passaic” by John T. Bowen, *The United States Drawing Book*, plate 33 (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).

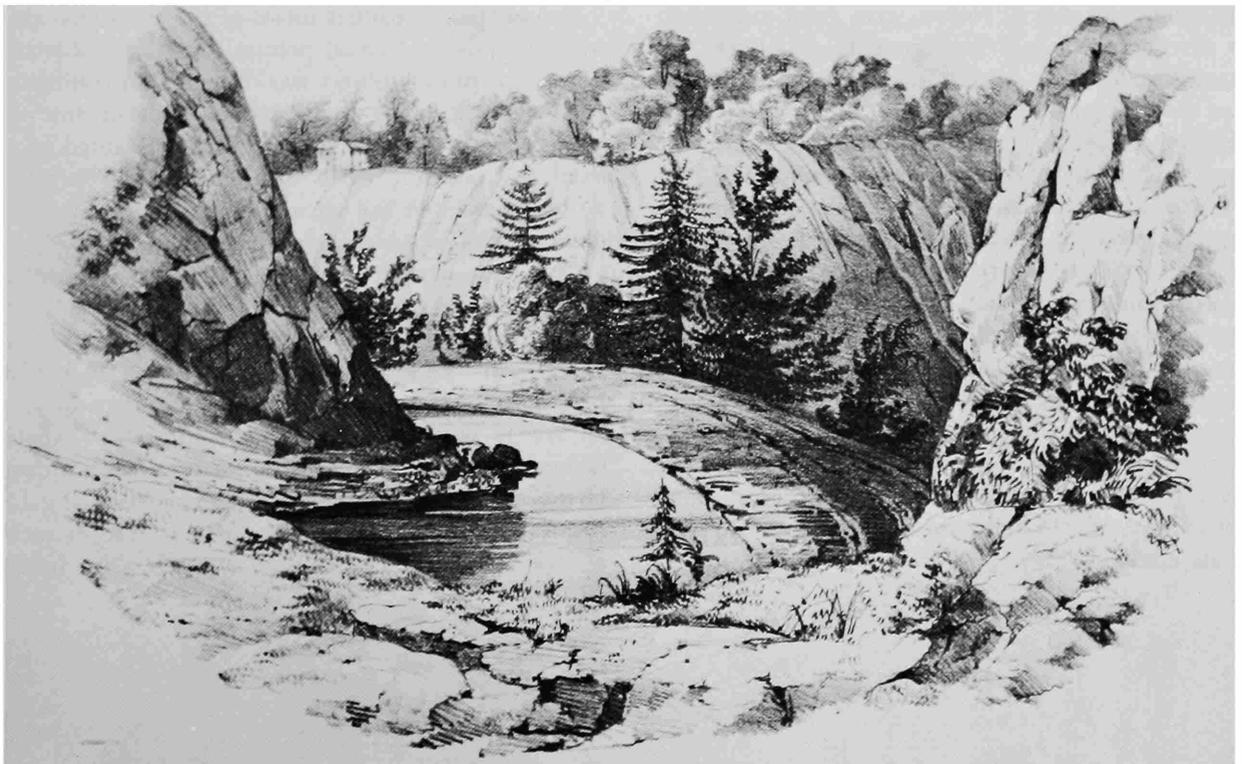




FIGURE 47.—“College and State House, New Haven,” by John T. Bowen, *The United States Drawing Book*, plate 36 (THE HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM).

the different kinds of foliage, give great animation to the picture.” And in Figure 47 (“College and State House, New Haven”) Bowen demonstrated that the “perspective in the center has its effect much heightened by the judicious introduction of the deep shadow under the noble avenue of trees.”

Virtually all the crusaders’ examples of “composition” referred to landscapes. “There is no branch of art in which the exercise of proper judgement and skill in composition may be more happily exemplified than in landscape,” insisted Chapman. He and the other crusaders simply reveled in painting the virgin land. For them, “Nature” would be the source of inspiration for a democratic art. The landscape painter, prodded the crusaders, “is enabled to elevate his art to a merited rank far above that of mere portraiture, and to bring successfully the ideal within its compass.”<sup>19</sup>

Landscapes, like other forms of the crusaders’ art, were composed of clear, precise individual objects. The shape of each object was to be clearly outlined, and—when painting a picture—each artist was to make sure that every figure was firmly planted in a fixed composition. This insistence upon precise vision meant that the artist was to find the fixed or ideal physical appearance of any object.

Chapman wrote: “It might appear that anyone who could draw, paint, or model, having a subject before him . . . would have nothing more to do than to copy what he sees.” But, he continued, this would be true only if nature met the requirements of art. “More is required than close imitation,” wrote Chapman: the “first requisite . . . of a composition is, that it should tell its story.” The artist must gain inspiration from nature, then draw nature in such a way so that, in Chapman’s words, “its ineffi-

ciencies" are "assisted, and its utmost strength elicited."<sup>20</sup>

The crusaders called for "inspiration," but one is hard pressed to discover where it fits into their aesthetics. The effect of light, atmosphere, or movement on any objects was, for example, secondary. This is not to say that every illustration in the manuals sparkled with a David-like sharpness. The crusaders believed in tints and shading to give a "pleasing effect," but they were not driven like the Impressionists in France to capture nature's variety. In *A New Drawing Book of American Scenery* (1845), Benjamin Coe informed his readers that "coffee and other colored liquids, poured on the drawings will give a warm tone and serve to fix the lead."<sup>21</sup> For those who preferred a more artistic approach, he provided this general formula: "The distance must be soft and distinct; as you approach the middle ground the forms of objects should be

more definite, but still attend to the masses and avoid detail. In the foreground the parts must be distinctly drawn, the lights and shadows made strong, and sometimes plants &c which are quite near may be finished in detail, so as to show the separate leaves."<sup>22</sup> To post-Civil War artists and critics, the formulas and the demand for excessive clarity created forms that were unnatural. To the crusaders, however, this insistence intensified reality. The artist, wrote Chapman, must "collect the diffusion of beauty" in nature and combine it into "imaginary pictures possessing all the truth and consistency of reality." The artist, to succeed, must depict "an impressiveness beyond that of the original subject to an ordinary observer." In the crusaders' minds, nature could be improved. Literal copying was an enemy of art: rules and formulas were her handmaidens.<sup>23</sup>

## Emerson, Ruskin, and the Art Crusade

**I**N CHAPTER ONE, we noted that the art of the early American drawing books was a social art, for in addition to its purely aesthetic function, it served historical, memorial, religious, commercial, educational, and recreational needs. It promised something for everyone, but in doing so it consciously ran the risk of promoting drawing without promoting art. To protect their cause, Smith, Chapman, and Peale emphasized the importance of learning “ideal forms.”

The language of the drawing manuals was sprinkled with philosophical adjectives that imbued the visual forms with moral significance. The “ideal” was equated with truth, and truth was the fixed and unchangeable standard of taste. The authors, in short, made their concept of art “absolute.” Mere opinions and confusing debates about how to draw and what to draw were not entertained. Rembrandt Peale made it clear that only the style of drawing he represented was correct: “however simple and elementary this course of instruction may appear, it comprises EVERY PRINCIPLE in the art, and is not only absolutely necessary to the young beginner who would learn to draw, but equally important to be understood by every one who has already practised drawing without the assistance of rules which are essential to insure correctness.”<sup>1</sup> There was one standard, one set of rules, one ideal: a single art for a democracy, not a democracy of tastes.

A democratic art had to be simple, direct, and rational. The method described in the manuals seemed to meet the requirements. It did not take any special talent to draw a straight line. Anyone could do it. After reading Chapman’s manual, *The Knickerbocker* magazine confessed in May of 1847:

We were a little incredulous at first as to the postulate assumed on the title page, “Any one who can learn to write, can learn to draw”; but as we went on, and saw how clearly the learner was conducted, step by step, from the lightest straight continuous, dotted, or curve, [sic] line to the diversified combination of these, which make up the finished sketch, we were compelled to admit that the assumption was well-grounded.<sup>2</sup>

*The Literary World* of February 1848 concurred:

“If people did but know how easy a thing it is to learn to draw, then . . . drawing would become as universal as writing.”<sup>3</sup> It was not hard to follow the instructions of authors like Chapman or Peale for imposing these lines on any object. “Correct drawing” and “good taste” could be learned simply by following the directions. One needed only a clear mind and honest determination. There was no mystery and no hocus-pocus in art.<sup>4</sup>

This emphasis upon “democracy” was characteristic of most art promoters of the day. Emerson’s lyceum lectures and essays repeatedly insisted that art would flourish among the masses.<sup>5</sup> In January 1831, the *North American Review* noted that for “the very Perfection of any free and liberal art, there must, it is certain, be . . . genuine political liberty.”<sup>6</sup> Twenty-seven years later *The United States Democratic Review* observed the power of political liberty “to republicanize art—to impart to its exquisite language an intonation whose lulling melodies are heard in the cottage as well as in the palace.”<sup>7</sup> Even after the Civil War when the drawing style, the promotional rhetoric, and the elementary pedagogy of the art manuals changed, the dedication to democracy endured.<sup>8</sup> One enthusiastic editor wrote: “The history of art is a golden thread running through the woof of aristocratic annuals. It is a prolonged record of the patronage of princes and nobles, blossoming only in royal gardens and beneath the sunshine of opulence and wealth. *Democratic art, until within a few years, was a thing unknown.*”<sup>9</sup>

This “unknown” form of art demanded rigid discipline and rigorous application. In 1831, John Rubens Smith paraphrased Sir Joshua Reynolds’ description of the personal characteristics of every successful artist:

To arrive at a satisfactory result in our studies, nothing is required but a good inclination and docile disposition; dismiss all high flown metaphysical disquisitions on genius, ambition, invention, &c, &c., they have nothing to do with this stage of the art any more than a genius for learning to read, a genius for learning to write, or a genius for learning plain arith-

metic; the many elaborate researches into, and descriptions of, the nature of genius, seem more calculated to raise a mist in the mind to the destruction of common sense, than to stimulate a rational exertion. At all events their subtle definitions and intricate ratiocination had better be deferred until we know HOW TO DRAW, as you would defer a literary discussion on any subject until your opponent or companion can read . . . [I]nclination, tempered with perseverance and docility, will obtain more power or talent in one lesson than your fitful genius obtains in a lifetime. . . .<sup>10</sup>

Smith detested the pseudoscience of phrenology which had stirred a popular interest in "native genius." He was also wary of psychological theories and long-winded disquisitions on new educational methods. He and his fellow crusaders based their teachings on the logical structure of their subject, disregarding the elaborate theories of child development that began before the Civil War and became so fashionable at the start of the twentieth century. As if to dignify and elevate their simple pedagogy, the crusaders repeated Leonardo da Vinci's words: "If we wish to ascend to the top of an edifice, we must be content to advance step by step, otherwise we shall never be able to attain it."<sup>11</sup>

The intellectual harmony of the drawing books is nothing short of amazing when one considers the diversity of opinions and styles then actually found in Europe and in America. Opposition to *preconceived* notions of beauty had been launched in Europe around 1750, nearly one hundred years before the rise of a democratic art. Writers like Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), David Hume (1711–1776), and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) insisted that beauty was not simply a standard combination of rational concepts, and that artistic greatness went far beyond conformity with authoritative laws and rules. Genius, not rules, said Kant, was the essence of art. What came to be known as nineteenth-century romanticism gained a strong foothold at the very time the art crusaders pressed their conservative, formula-oriented, versions of drawing. This was a period of intellectual turmoil and experimentation. Below the Olympian heights of Europe's intellectuals, even Americans debated the meaning of art. Emerson was writing at the same time as Henry Tuckerman. And William Sidney Mount painted his sharp, clear genre scenes while Thomas Cole dreamed of Arcadia. The manuals show little of this variety. They offered an open road to art, bypassing most of the message of Emerson's transcen-

dentalism, and completely ignoring the popular works of John Ruskin.

Many American painters and sculptors simply disagreed with Emerson's vague prescriptions for beauty. The crusaders, in particular, debated the transcendentalists on three counts. First, the crusaders believed that learning to draw could reform any person or society. This idea seemed to reverse the theories of Thoreau, Emerson, and other philosophers of American transcendentalism. Those who preached of the oversoul often insisted that "good" art came from a "good" society. Secondly, the transcendentalists ridiculed the crusaders' "naive" belief in rules of art or figure "types" to simplify perception. In his essay, "Art," Emerson emphasized that "beauty is a finer charm than . . . rules of art ever can teach." Great works, he said, are never "too picturesque"; they are "simple," "familiar," and "sincere." They appeal directly to man's soul, to man's *natural* affinity with beauty. Thirdly, both groups differed in their concepts of the meaning of creativity. The transcendentalists generally agreed that art served as a tool for understanding nature. At its best, art isolated specific objects, like trees, or flowers, from the apparent chaos of their normal environment, and this provided an insight to the oversoul. Drawing and painting techniques did not interest Emerson or his friends, for the artist was an agent of God, working under His direction. Writing in *The Dial* of January 1841, Emerson philosophized: "The universal soul is the alone creator of the useful and the beautiful; therefore to make anything useful or beautiful the individual must be submitted to the universal mind." This type of generalization did not help a practicing artist; in fact, it seemed to devalue his individual powers. Yet much of the rhetoric *sounds* transcendental. Benjamin Coe and Fessenden Nott Otis believed that learning to draw would lead to an appreciation of nature. They praised nature as emphatically as any resident of Brook Farm or Concord, and they saw nature as the source of truth and beauty. Yet, their primary message was clear: a disciplined mind and an educated eye were essential for any man. They denounced those who said that "to seek beauty was to miss it often" or that the "highest condition of art is artlessness." Their drawing books were based on the theory that men could consciously bring about an artistic Renaissance. The transcendentalists seemed to sneer. "Beauty will not

come at the call of a legislature, nor will it repeat in England or America its history in Greece," wrote Emerson in 1830. Art "will come, as always, unannounced, and spring up between the feet of brave and earnest men." Teaching ideal types that were based on the art of the past struck the transcendentalists as wasted effort. Emerson, once again, summarized this conviction: "It is vain that we look for genius to reiterate its miracles in the old arts; it is its instinct to find beauty and holiness in new and necessary facts, in the field and road-side, in the shop and mill." Both the transcendentalists and the art crusaders emphasized the availability of art to all who would seek it, but there was an essential difference between the groups. For the transcendentalists, America's art would come from the masses; it could not be forced upon them in the form of rules and recipes.<sup>12</sup> To the crusaders, this was folly.

Despite their poetic pronouncements, most transcendentalists were novices in the fields of art history and aesthetics. Few possessed the knowledge of either John Rubens Smith or Rembrandt Peale, but they quickly found a learned, eloquent champion: the brilliant English critic, John Ruskin (1819–1900). The first volume of his monumental work, *Modern Painters* (1843), appeared in England during the third decade of the art crusade. Pirated copies were published in the United States before the official American edition in 1850, and as the *Atlantic Monthly* recalled, *Modern Painters* was "one of the sensation-books of the time and fell upon the public opinion of the day like a thunderbolt from a clear sky."<sup>13</sup> The young transcendentalists loved Ruskin's freewheeling, outright rejection of many old masters. When Emerson denounced the "worship of the past" in his essay "Self Reliance," he spoke in harmony with the "Oxford Graduate." Ruskin's love of Turner and his insistence that modern artists stood above painters of the past received wide acclaim in America. One American writer believed that the first volume of *Modern Painters* influenced—above any other treatise—"the buildings and paintings of the day." Another declared that "'Modern Painters' is the most important Art-book of the century. It has revolutionized the taste of thousands: it will revolutionize the whole artistic world."<sup>14</sup>

Despite this popularity, Ruskin's name did not appear in American drawing books. Surely the art crusaders favored some ideas of this prophet of

modernism. In his works *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) and *The Stones of Venice* (1852–1853), Ruskin outlined the conviction that art revealed a nation's character. Moreover, in *Modern Painters* he spoke of the moral justification of art, which sounded somewhat reminiscent of the ideas expressed in American manuals. And he avowed the crusaders' philosophy that art appreciation came from education, not from innate ability.

The difference outweighed the similarities, however, for the essence of Ruskin's aesthetics was anathema to the art crusaders. His rejection of old masters (particularly Claude, Gaspard, Salvator Rosa, Teniers, and Berghem) cut at the heart of the drawing books. Chapman, for example, filled his manual with illustrations of Renaissance artists and their descendants. In a letter to Thomas Sully he expressed a fondness for Domenichino: the very artist who Ruskin said painted "examples of evil."<sup>15</sup> Canova, the Italian sculptor who died in 1822, was very popular among the "conservative" connoisseurs in America in the 1840s. They saw him as a modern Phidias or Praxiteles. In *The Stones of Venice* (Volume 1), Ruskin attacked the admiration of Canova as "one of the most deadly symptoms of the civilization of the Upper classes in the present century."<sup>16</sup> He also fired devastating criticisms at any artist who worked "mechanically." He took special aim at the crusaders' patron saint, Sir Joshua Reynolds. The English master was wrong, in Ruskin's opinion, when he lectured "that general truths are more important than particular ones."<sup>17</sup> Time and again Ruskin questioned the fundamental assumptions of art; and at every point he rattled tranquil artists, teachers, and critics into a state of nervous doubt. He could not be ignored. He labeled the age-old standards of the art crusade false, and then—with the publication of his own drawing book—stepped into the elementary, practical world of art education.

Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing* appeared in 1857. His insistence on hard work, his hope that men would learn to see "keenly," and his belief that it is a "more important thing for . . . unprofessional students, to know how to appreciate the art of others, than to gain much power in art themselves," were ideas expressed by the art crusaders.<sup>18</sup> His system of drawing was radically different, however, in two ways. First, while Americans began by drawing a "controlled line," Ruskin prefaced his lessons with

the words, "Nature relieves one mass, or one tint against another; but *outlines none*."<sup>19</sup> One sees, he wrote, not by lines but by "an arrangement of patches of different colours variously shaded."<sup>20</sup> His first lessons focused on "shading" and "depth." Students were trained, from the beginning, to see subjects in terms of light and shade, not in terms of lines. Second, he did not establish ideal "types" or present the general essence of any object. As in *Modern Painters*, he called generalizations "the act of a vulgar, incapable, and unthinking mind."<sup>21</sup> He emphasized the complexity of vision and rated an artist's talent by his ability to capture the basis of "natural" variety. "[N]othing is ever seen perfectly," wrote Ruskin, "but only by fragments, and under various conditions of obscurity."<sup>22</sup>

Unlike American authors who believed that the moral power of art came from a strengthening of mental and visual powers, Ruskin said that God revealed morality and beauty to man. The calm approach of the art crusaders who used lines and formulas in a steady rise to the "Ideal" contrasted sharply to Ruskin's beliefs. He spoke of paintings as "holy lessons" and he said they lifted one's thoughts "to the throne of the Deity." The building block approach of American authors did not, in Ruskin's mind, necessarily add up to beauty. Beauty was the interaction of many factors, all harmonizing to make men perceive "the wonder . . . the power . . . the glory of the universe." For example, he wrote in *The Elements of Drawing*: "I believe that the endeavor to separate, in the course of instruction, the observation of light and shade from that of local color, has always been and must always be, destructive of the student's power of accurate sight."<sup>23</sup> Instead of teaching his students to see the "outlines" of objects, Ruskin urged them to learn the concept of "form." Form was more complicated than outline. Ruskin defined form as "that perfect and harmonious unity of outline with light and shade, by which all the parts and projections and proportions of a body are fully explained to the eye." Form was more subjective, less scientific than ideal outlines. Form, as Ruskin defined it, encouraged interpretation even at the most elementary levels of drawing instruction. It called for able students to capture the subtle nuances of line and shade, and it commanded every student to search out the unique or essential character of the subject

matter. For these reasons, one does not find in Ruskin the phrase "any one who can learn to write, can learn to draw." His system of drawing did not claim to be open to all. Yet he was the harbinger of new ideas presented in a powerful, fluent prose. By divorcing perception from absolute, rational rules he devised a system of aesthetics quite different from that of the American drawing books.

*The Elements of Drawing* was one of the most popular drawing books published in America during the second half of the nineteenth century. Reviewers praised Ruskin's emphasis on the "variety" and the "complexity" of nature, and hailed the manual as a healthy antidote to "traditional" drawing instructors. Ruskin elevated drawing from mere mechanics and formulas, wrote a critic in the *North American Review*. He brought nature into art.<sup>24</sup>

Major artists like Ashur B. Durand praised *Modern Painters* as a perfect guide for appreciating the American wilderness. James Jackson Jarves embraced Ruskin's ideas, as did many journalists, critics, and philosophers. In fact, during the third quarter of the nineteenth century much of what Ruskin had to say was right in step with what the crusaders termed the "fashionable ideas" which made art the product of irrational impulses, flashes of genius, or free interpretations of nature. The crusaders' belief in ideal, linear forms had grown out of the strenuous, almost contradictory, demands of a democratic art. As they saw it, everyone should learn to draw, yet drawing must not be overly simplified or watered down. Ideal types appeared to guarantee a minimum aesthetic standard. They could be used by artists and by people of ordinary perception. The nonartist, once he learned to recognize the "ideal," could judge any work of art. He could rate an artist's ability to draw, and he could determine when an artist attempted a new form or an innovative design. The drawing books, then, provided a way of thinking about art, which served numerous American artists before the Civil War. They are keys to the way artists taught themselves (and others) to see, to create, and to appreciate the beautiful. The generations of artists who came after the Civil War rejected the system. Ruskin, not Rembrandt Peale, sang their favorite tune. They argued against the crusaders' system by noting that, even at this elementary level of art perception, a

knowledge of types can too easily become a dead end. Too often a student no longer sees a total design or a complete work, so he focuses his eyes on isolated figures. Judging from their private writings, some of the crusaders understood this danger, but they

rationalized their approach by explaining that their books were elementary treatises. All qualifications to the motto "Anyone who can learn to write, can also learn to draw" could be made at higher levels of instruction.

## From Art to Education

AN IMMEDIATE GOAL of the art crusade was to make drawing instruction an integral part of the public school curriculum. William Minifie, the Baltimore architect and educator, wrote in 1854: “[If] we should make drawing a branch of common school education, we should have an opportunity of selecting those who evidence superior talent for the Art, and at the same time, by *improving the taste of all*, we should create in many, an appreciation of the beautiful, and consequently very much extend the consumption of Art-production.”<sup>1</sup> The common school was a poor institution of hope for the art crusaders. It was a faint and elusive institution in the decades preceding the Civil War, generally underfinanced, disorganized, and unresponsive to anything beyond the three Rs.<sup>2</sup> Rembrandt Peale discovered this in the 1840s when he introduced *Graphics* to the students and teachers of Philadelphia. Peale was employed as a Professor of Drawing at the sum of \$800.00 a year.<sup>3</sup> For some unknown reason he incurred the wrath of school officials who denounced him a “charlatan,” and sought to dismiss the idea of bringing art to the students of Philadelphia. Peale requested an investigation and opened his records. The school board mailed questionnaires to artists and engineers seeking their professional opinion regarding the soundness of Peale’s ideas. Thomas Sully, a close friend of Peale, answered with enthusiastic approval:

- (1) Should instruction in drawing commence with drawing by the eye or with instruments?—  
It should by all means commence with drawing by the eye.
- (2) Should instruction in drawing commence with perspective and drawing from models or with drawing from patterns?—  
The pupils should copy patterns first, and models afterwards.
- (3) In learning to draw from patterns should a beginner commence with complex forms, or with straight lines and simple geometrical figures?—  
The pupil should begin with straight lines and simple forms first, and afterwards go on to those more complex. To begin with complex forms or with models is to attack

all the difficulties of drawing at once. It is like attempting to read before knowing the alphabet, or to run before knowing how to walk.

- (4) What are the things chiefly aimed at in learning to draw?—  
Accurate perception of the true forms of objects and skill of hand in imitating what is seen.
- (5) Is the progression of exercises as given in Peale’s *Graphics* adapted to facilitate the pupil in acquiring this accuracy of eye and freedom of hand?—  
More so than anything I have ever seen.
- (6) Does the practice of enlarging and diminishing, as recommended by Mr. Peale, give any facility in training the eye and hand?—  
It does. No one who has not tried it is aware of its importance in this respect.
- (7) Does the subsequent practice of drawing in perspective from models facilitate in training the eye and hand?—  
Undoubtedly. It completes the training already commenced by copying from patterns.
- (8) Would this training of the eye and hand be gained with as much ease and certainty by beginning to draw from models before copying patterns?—  
I should think not.
- (9) . . .
- (10) Is a person who begins to learn to draw with instruments likely to acquire habits of eye and hand that will impede his progress in becoming an expert draughtsman?—  
The eye becomes accustomed to rely entirely upon the measurement of rule and compass and the hand becomes still and mechanical in its movements. It is with the utmost difficulty that these habits, when once contracted, can be shaken off.
- (11) Does a person who has learned to draw by the eye alone experience any facility in learning to draw afterwards by instruments?—  
The person who has acquired accuracy of eye and the free use of the hand can use instruments with much greater dexterity than if he had not enjoyed this previous training. In fact, perfection in the use of instruments cannot be easily acquired without previous training of the eye and hand.
- (12) Does learning to draw by the eye give any facility in learning to write?—  
I have never seen this experiment tried, but cannot see how it could be otherwise, as writing is only one form of drawing.
- (13) What is your opinion of the propriety of connecting drawing and writing?—  
I think it an admirable plan.

- (14) Would it be of advantage to every young person, whatever his intended occupation, to learn to draw?—  
Without doubt.
- (15) Is the time given in the high school to this department (less than two hours a week) sufficient to extend the course of instruction advantageously to any other branches of drawing than pencil drawing from patterns and models?—  
I should think not.
- (16) If a boy learns pencil drawing from patterns and models in the manner proposed by Mr. Peale, can he without difficulty, after leaving school, learn its application to the various mechanic arts?—  
With the greatest ease.
- (17) Do the specimens herewith submitted evince any proficiency in off-hand drawing?—  
I think the lines are drawn with remarkable correctness and truth. Indeed, I am surprised, not with their finish (for they are unfinished), but with the freedom and skill of hand and the accuracy of eye which they evince on the part of those who have given so little time to the subject.
- (18) Could these specimens have been executed by persons ignorant of the principles of drawing?—  
Unquestionably not.
- (19) Could they have been executed with equal facility and accuracy without previous training of the eye and hand in drawing from patterns?—  
They could not.
- (20) If the boys who executed these specimens continue to receive two lessons a week for a year to come will they by the end of that time probably have become so far proficient in pencil drawing as to be able to apply it to the the various arts of life?—  
I think they will.
- (21) Wherein does Mr. Peale's system differ from the system generally practiced?—  
Not so much in its principles, although it contains some new and important principles, as in the simplicity of its arrangements and the perfection of its details.

Sulley's answers were repeated, almost verbatim, by both engineers and artists—all supporting Peale's style of art. When the results were published, he was vindicated. By 1843 the comptrollers of the public schools of Philadelphia saw fit to "recommend a continuance of the course of Instruction in Drawing, as taught . . . by Professor Peale."<sup>4</sup>

Peale's problem with the school officials may well have been caused by his pompous manner or some other incidental factor, but his plight was not unique. Many reformers saw a natural or theoretical bond between mass education and the art crusade. Horace Mann, the dynamo of the common school movement, often referred to the value of drawing in the *Common School Journal*, and in his famous reports to the Massachusetts Board of Education. "Drawing of itself," wrote Mann in 1843, "is an expressive and beautiful language. A few strokes of

the pen or pencil will often represent what no amount of words, however well chosen, can communicate." He emphasized that art was an "asset to every rational being" and especially "useful to the inventive genius of our people." He believed that all men should learn to draw and urged all schools to make art an integral part of the elementary education. He made "utility" his watchword.<sup>5</sup>

Mann's enthusiasm for a democratic art influenced the drawing promoters. For example, Joseph Ropes (1812–1855), a student of John Rubens Smith and author of three drawing manuals, quoted Mann in *Linear Perspective for the Use of Schools* (second edition, 1850): "Every man should be able to sketch a road or a river, to draw the outlines of a simple machine, a piece of household furniture, or a farming utensil, and to delineate the internal arrangement and construction of a house."<sup>6</sup> The simple, homespun sound of Mann's prose echoed the tone of Benjamin Franklin's words published years earlier in 1749. *Proposed Hints for an Academy* contained Franklin's conviction that drawing was essential for a sound, practical education, and he classified drawing among the most useful studies. Franklin's reasoning went as follows:

*Studies to be selected and adopted.*—As to their studies, it would be well if they could be taught *everything* that is useful and *everything* that is ornamental. But art is long and their time is short. It is therefore proposed that they learn those things *most useful* and *most ornamental*; regard being had to the several professions for which they are intended.

*Writing, drawing, and arithmetic.*—All should be taught to write a fair hand, and swift, as that is useful to all. And with it may be learned something of drawing by imitation of prints and some of the first principles of perspective. . . .

Drawing, according to Franklin, helped to prepare a "youth" for "any business, calling, or profession, except in such wherein languages are required."<sup>7</sup> Although his fellow Philadelphians refused to adopt Franklin's scheme, his words became holy writ for the crusaders. Educators like Mann and Henry Barnard quoted Franklin's belief in "practical utility" with predictable regularity, seeking to make this American hero the patron saint of democratic art and universal education.

Henry Barnard was a prolific author and the first United States Commissioner of Education (1867). He believed that an early introduction to drawing would "correct the taste and improve the judgment" of any student. The word "correct" betrayed his sympathy with artists like Smith, Peale, and Chap-

man. "Taste" did not come naturally. It was a matter of cultivation and education—a sign of civilization. And Barnard took pains to emphasize in his 890-page book, *National Education in Europe* (1854), that students in other nations were learning to draw at an early age and were reaping innumerable benefits.<sup>8</sup> In two magazines that he edited, the *Connecticut Common School Journal* (1838–1842) and *The American Journal of Education* (1855–1882), Barnard published articles calling for the study of art, particularly drawing, in the common schools. He used these magazines to promote the ideas of Pestalozzi, to praise the efforts of the art crusaders, and to spread news of drawing among American people.<sup>9</sup>

Neither the philosophy of Benjamin Franklin nor the wishes of Mann or Barnard guaranteed practical results. Numerous attempts to make drawing a regular part of common school education were waged throughout the nineteenth century. The evidence is spotty and the results are difficult to assess, but several efforts deserve mention.

In Boston during the 1820s William Bently Fowle struggled to introduce drawing into the elementary and secondary schools. He was fired in 1823 from one teaching position at Boston's largest school for boys when he expressed "liberal" ideas and attempted to alter the old curriculum. A few of his friends and sympathizers built a schoolhouse (The Female Monitorial School) in which he could enjoy a full measure of academic freedom. Here he taught drawing and used a new educational tool, the blackboard.<sup>10</sup>

In 1825 Fowle published an elementary drawing manual that emphasized the basic geometric shape of all objects. Although part of *An Introduction to Linear Drawing* was translated from a French manual by M. Francoeur, Fowle assured his readers that his system had been altered for "the use of schools in the United States." Unlike more sophisticated promoters (i.e., Chapman, Smith, and Peale), who introduced students to serious thoughts about art, this practical New England educator did not wrestle with the problems of aesthetics. He encouraged students to learn the art of *copying* from prints: "A precision may be acquired by the eye and hand almost equal to that of ordinary instruments."

*An Introduction to Linear Drawing* went through at least three editions, each increasing in size. "Ele-

ments of perspective drawing" and a series of questions enlarged the second edition, while a third contained "an appendix to Part 1, wherein directions are given for drawing *by the aid of instruments*, all the geometrical figures previously explained." As a pioneer work even the final edition was crude and out of step with most manuals published between 1820 and 1860. Fowle was not an artist, and most of his work is somewhat shallow, bordering on the incredulous or, at least, the superficial. His major contribution was his ability to stir men's minds, to make them aware of the importance of drawing as a public art.

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s sporadic programs for drawing instruction appeared in Massachusetts, but it was not until 1852, when the committee in charge of the Boston public schools hired a landscape painter, William Bartholomew, that a sustained effort can be found. Using his own textbooks as the official primers, Bartholomew put the high schools on a single system of instruction. Like other crusaders who asked only that drawing should "take its place with other studies, and do its legitimate work," he did not believe that drawing would make "all our children . . . artists, architects, or designers." In the *Teachers Guide to Bartholomew's Primary School Drawing Cards*, the rallying cry for a democratic art was sounded:

An appreciation of art and beauty will be awakened in the masses, at an impressible period in their lives, which will exert an incalculable influence upon the appointments of their future; all will acquire skill enough to represent with ease and accuracy any needful combination of forms, as an aid to memory for themselves, or a means of illustration for others; and many will discover in themselves talent, which, if it does not in all cases determine a future career, will become a source of unspeakable enjoyment as a recreation from other toils. To the future artist, help will be given at an earlier period than has hitherto been possible; and to the mechanic, it will be a matter of dollars and cents by the discipline which develops a perception of the truths of form; for this ability to *see clearly* constitutes the principal difference among workmen who have to do with forms.<sup>11</sup>

Bartholomew believed that an elementary drawing system should be as easy to teach as possible. And it should aim at "an intelligent comprehension of the laws which govern representation, and an eye and hand trained to express them." Leaning heavily on Peale's *Graphics*, Bartholomew's elementary course rested on 12 drawing cards that illustrated 24 lessons. Each student was supposed to receive a packet of cards, a drawing slate, and a

pencil. The cards could be fixed to the slate at a proper angle for the students to copy.

Bartholomew insisted that all instructors establish class rules for order and discipline. First, he demanded that all students proceed at the same rate. Second, no one was permitted to erase his work. The first attempt had to be "true." And, third, the daily lessons would not last more than 20 minutes.

Taking his lead from Pestalozzi, Bartholomew instructed his students to learn a sense of proportion. He aimed to build compasses in their eyes. His elementary drawing exercises consisted of putting dots in horizontal and vertical lines. The first dot was placed in the center of the drawing slate. And successive dots were marked in equal spaces from the center:

1	2	3	4
		·	·
		·	·
		·	·
		·	·
		·	·

During these exercises the teacher explained basic terms: "right and left," "equal distances," "between," and "middle." In subsequent lessons tiny crosses were substituted for the dots, and the same proportion exercises were repeated:

1	2	3	4
		+	+
		+	+
+	+	+	+
		+	+
		+	+

Bartholomew encouraged young students to work in all directions from the center of the slate—left to right, right to left, top to bottom, and bottom to top. This was true even when students began drawing undulating lines, and finally straight lines. He believed that beginners were easily discouraged by failing to produce a true line immediately. These dots and crosses were simply introductory devices which prepared students for the regular assignments found in many manuals.<sup>12</sup>

It appears that the patterns set by Bartholomew and other Boston art crusaders were repeated in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Cleveland—at least to the extent that artist-authors made a continual series of efforts to introduce their manuals into the common schools. Rembrandt Peale's experiences have already been noted. In Baltimore, William Minifie promoted his *Textbook of Geometrical Drawing* and in Cleveland Jehu Brainerd's *Elementary Principles of Plane and Perspective Drawing* and a Mr. Shattuck's *Columbian Drawing Book* were offered as useful primers. These initial efforts generally failed, yet by the time of the Civil War numerous state legislatures had *considered* requiring public instruction in drawing, and no fewer than 35 book companies had published drawing manuals—each, of course, hoping to win the approval of at least one or two boards of education. This hope, however, was not fulfilled. The books by the art crusaders did not become standard works in the common schools.

## Industrial Art and Psychology

**D**ESPITE THE MULTITUDE of manuals to appear before 1860, not a single one was written as a textbook for a particular class level or a particular age group. The superintendent of the Boston Schools, John D. Philbrick, spoke of this in 1870 when he complained of "UTTER WANT OF SYSTEM." There was "Nowhere any system from the primary to the high schools, and in three sections of Boston different methods were in vogue in the intermediate and upper schools."<sup>1</sup>

In criticizing the confusion, Philbrick spoke to a particular need. He was an educator, not an artist, and his basic concern was pedagogy rather than aesthetics. A set of 12 drawing textbooks, one for each grade in the elementary and secondary schools, was his goal.<sup>2</sup>

Several art crusaders, particularly William Bartholomew in Boston and John Gadsby Chapman in New York, devised plans to create such a series of textbooks, but both ended in failure. Bartholomew's efforts were especially frustrating. Throughout the 1870s his publisher, Woolworth, Ainsworth and Company, competed against the drawing texts being printed by Osgood and Co. of Boston. The Osgood books were written by Walter Smith, who was trained at the South Kensington Museum in England and brought to Boston to head up the new statewide public drawing program in 1870. His textbooks began to appear in the early 1870s, gradually displacing the older manuals of William Bartholomew. By 1880, Smith proudly wrote in his annual report: "From the lowest classes in the primary schools to the most advanced in the high and evening schools, we now have a progressive course, pointing in one direction, pursuing one aim . . . by one system." The "one system," of course, was the Smith system originally sponsored by Osgood and Company.<sup>3</sup>

The shift from Bartholomew to Smith marked an essential change in the story of art education in America. Until that time, working artists were the authors of most drawing books, and working artists

directed the course of popular drawing instruction. Walter Smith and his followers, however, were men of another stamp: their motivations, their goals, and their audiences were quite different from anything envisioned by Rembrandt Peale, John Rubens Smith, or John Gadsby Chapman.

In short, the public schools helped to transform the study of drawing as promoted in the art crusade from a broad and loosely organized social movement to a specific course for artisans and mechanics. The famous Massachusetts law of 1870, for example, reads in part: "Any city or town may, and every city or town having more than 10,000 inhabitants shall, annually make provisions for giving free instruction in *industrial* or *mechanical* drawing to persons over fifteen years of age, either in day or evening schools, under the direction of the school committee."<sup>4</sup>

In emphasizing the "necessity" of drawing as well as its practicality, one educator, looking back to 1870, went so far as to write (in 1888) that drawing was a basic necessity because:

As Nations progress in civilization and as the consequent competition between them increases, the preparation required for the struggle for existence varies, as well for the individual units who compose the nation as for the nation itself. Hence, it follows, that what was not felt by any one as a necessity a century ago, is everywhere recognized as indispensable to-day. This is as true as to what are to be held as absolute essentials in education as it is in all other respects. It was the recognition of the fact that, in all industrial arts, this nation was in danger of relative inferiority, that forced the consideration of this matter of remodeling the studies of the common schools with a view to definite industrial training of the hand and eye.<sup>5</sup>

"Industrial training" was only a *part* of the crusaders' vision, but for many drawing promoters of the 1870s it was the sole justification for teaching art in the public schools. The textbooks of Walter Smith embodied this approach. Trained in a linear style which was similar to that of the art crusaders, Smith promoted many ideas found in the older manuals of Peale and Chapman, and he succeeded in

institutionalizing many of their beliefs. He insisted, for example: "(1) All children who can be taught to read, write, and cipher, can be taught to draw. (2) As an elementary subject . . . [drawing] should be taught by the regular teachers, and not by special instructors."

While Smith often worked from the controlled line and a variety of geometric figures, his whole orientation was aimed toward "industrial drawing," which would help students win a "profitable, practical life." He did write of beauty and art, from time to time, but these were rhetorical flights. Drawing, he noted, helps "develop accuracy of perception and to exercise the imagination, thereby tending to produce a love of order and to nourish originality." Yet, almost in the next breath, he observed that the "study of practical art by drawing should . . . comprehend the exactness of science by the use of instruments, as in geometrical drawing and designing." The crusaders made fine art a practical science, but Walter Smith worked to make the practical arts beautiful. This reversal of priorities marked a new emphasis which favored mechanical drafting at the cost of high culture.

Smith used the term "industrial art" in place of the crusaders' "fine art." "Industrial art" was a vague category consisting of decorative objects which joined the skills of industry and the refinement of art. It referred to fine textiles, ornamental painting, furniture, jewelry, glass, and pottery. It was "that great middle ground between Fine Art and mere mechanical execution," theorized Walter Smith—it meant the addition of beauty "to an article which, in itself, supplies a mere bodily want." A democratic art, in Smith's mind, entered people's lives by way of utilitarian objects. Pictures were nice but confusing to the masses. Smith's art students would learn to make lovelier lines and finer furniture—they left the painting to professional artists.<sup>6</sup>

The course of drawing instruction embodied in Smith's manuals, therefore, was designed to assist scientists, engineers, mechanics, and artisans who had been calling for free instruction in the art of drafting for several decades. Mechanics' institutes, young men's associations, instrument makers, architects, and itinerate teachers offered occasional instruction before the Civil War, but this was insufficient. The Philadelphia machinist and engineer George Escol Sellers (1808–1899), for example, reminisced that before 1830 even good drafting books

were hard to find in America. Writing in 1884 Sellers remembered that: "As late as 1831 I could not find on sale in either New York or Philadelphia a copy of Dr. Alexander Jamieson's *Mechanical Dictionary*, then considered a standard work in England, and was obliged to import a copy through Carey and Lea, who ordered with my copy some extra ones which they held a long time before finding purchasers."<sup>7</sup> Early in the nineteenth century mechanics worked by rule of thumb and by tradition. Even the famous inventor, Oliver Evans, was incapable of making scale drawings. As Sellers noted: "Mr. Evans made all his drawings full size on chalked boards. . . . His drawing instruments consisted of a two-footed rule, straight edge, square, and compass. His first designs were rough pencil sketches, not drawn to scale. To combine and reduce these full size working drawings and put them in shape to exhibit, he depended on Frederick and John Eckstein, then copperplate engravers in Philadelphia." The inventor, John Brandt, suffered the same deficiency. As one contemporary observed: "All his thinking was . . . full size."<sup>8</sup>

A knowledge of drafting, of course, did not preclude a love of fine art. Sellers, who was the nephew of Rembrandt Peale, learned his skills from a future art crusader, John Henry Hopkins, Bishop of Vermont. As a seminary student, Hopkins earned his keep by drafting for machine shops in Philadelphia. Sellers attested to Hopkins' talent by noting that "he was certainly the best mechanical draftsman of the time."<sup>9</sup>

Interestingly enough, the art crusaders' linear style—their controlled line—served as useful, elementary training for budding mechanical draftsmen. By drawing geometric figures and learning simplified formulas for perspective, students absorbed the fundamentals of mechanical drawing. A caustic book reviewer for *The Atlantic Monthly*, who perceived this linkage in Chapman's *American Drawing Book*, denounced it because "all application of science *directly* to artistic work endangers its poetic character, and almost invariably gives rise to a hardness and formalism," the "reverse" of art. The crusaders' "right-line system of drawing," he continued, "taught mechanical skills, but it failed to stimulate fertile, artistic minds." Chapman's chapter on perspective was particularly deceiving because, in the reviewer's mind, it was "useful to architectural or mechanical draughtsman, may-be, but little so to

artists." Many contemporaries viewed the art crusade and the call for mechanical draftsmen as harmonious, or even identical, movements. But it is important to remember that the crusaders eschewed drawing tools, commanding students to form "a compass in the eye." Moreover, the crusaders aimed to instill a love for high art—mechanical drafting was a secondary consideration.<sup>10</sup>

The Massachusetts law of 1870, then, was not a legal expression of the art crusade. Under the leadership of Walter Smith its practical application meant art for industrial design and handcrafts. The early concept of a democratic art was left to die.

But the Massachusetts law of 1870 alerted a new promoter and publisher to the profits of a popular art. His name was Louis Prang. An inventive printer who would eventually build a thriving business with chromolithographic reproductions of original watercolors and oil paintings, Prang was a perceptive businessman, credited as being the father of the American Christmas card and as a "pioneer" in the publication of art books and art supplies. During the early 1870s he tried to outbid Osgood and Company for the rights to Walter Smith's textbooks. In 1874 the companies decided that Prang would print the materials for the elementary classes, while Osgood and Company supplied the higher grades. By the end of the 1870s, however, Prang controlled the Massachusetts market.<sup>11</sup>

While Walter Smith managed the Massachusetts art curriculum from 1870 to 1880, his work, in Prang's words, "was attended by many difficulties." These were years of "experimentation," one observer noted, when every artist and teacher seemed to have his own system. Prang, too, had a special bias. Although he profited from Smith's manuals, he criticized them as too old-fashioned and "too English." Smith was not a modern educator, Prang wrote later in 1890:

... he had but little knowledge of pedagogies, and failed to appreciate the importance of educational methods. ... He ... was unable to present the various phases of the work in their proper relation to industrial and fine art, so that after ten years of labor he found himself without support by our principal educators on the one hand, and by our leading artists on the other. His work in this country, therefore, came to an end because of his failure to bring his ideas into harmony with our educational and artistic needs.

On the one hand, Walter Smith appeared too similar to John Gadsby Chapman and Rembrandt Peale. His insistence on strict discipline and the straight

line as the basis of drawing disturbed Prang. On the other hand, his narrow vision of "industrial drawing" appeared to destroy any hope of building a popular art. Gradually, Prang replaced Smith's works with a series of books which emphasized neither high aesthetics nor industrial art but progressive pedagogy. As Prang wrote: a successful course in drawing "could only come by a process of development—as the outgrowth of practical experience in teaching the subject—under the general conditions that surround public education at the present time."<sup>12</sup>

*The Prang Course* was authored primarily by three educators: John B. Clark, Walter Perry, and Mary Dana Hicks. Clark had worked with Walter Smith and had tried for 10 years to introduce Smith's ideas to the common schools. This experience made him invaluable. While Rembrandt Peale and John Gadsby Chapman traveled to Europe to find ideas for their drawing books, Clark sought his education in the common schools. As Prang wrote in 1890, Clark had "an intimate knowledge of the school conditions under which Art education must be developed, [as well as] very definite ideas in regard to the educational principles to be observed in making it an integral feature in the education of the people." The crusaders had started with the principles of art, but Prang—under Clark's influence—worked from principles of education.<sup>13</sup>

The second Prang author, Walter Perry, served as supervisor of drawing in the public schools of Worcester, Massachusetts, and then moved on to head the Art Department of the Pratt Industrial Institute (Brooklyn, New York).

Mary Dana Hicks, who later became Prang's second wife, appears to have been the key author in the triumvirate. Descended from an old New England family, she established a reputation as a historian of education and a careful observer of the mental development of children. Having studied art at the Massachusetts Normal Art School and the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Mrs. Hicks (at age 85) earned a Master of Education degree from Harvard University. Practical experience as the teacher of drawing in the public schools of Syracuse, New York, supplemented her university training.<sup>14</sup>

Her influential drawing manual, *The Use of Models*, served as a primary text in the Prang series. Students did not begin by drawing straight lines, as

in the crusaders' manuals. They played with blocks instead. Each student received an assortment of blocks of different geometric shapes. By handling these shapes students got the "feel" of each, learning—unconsciously—the difference between spheres, cubes, cylinders, cones, etc. The students were encouraged to model each shape in clay and then to try to draw the blocks. These early drawings, of course, represented only one side and one plane. But by trial and error students learned to draw each block in perspective. These drawing exercises were interspersed with sessions of cutting and folding paper models of the blocks. Never was a student to hear the words "controlled line" or "harmonious curve."<sup>15</sup>

The Hicks' system rested on three assumptions which countered the theories of Peale and Chapman: (1) Early training in drawing succeeded only by cultivating all the organs of sense. Stale, repetitive exercises discouraged anxious students. (2) The true perception of form came from models or real life (i.e., nature). Lithographs or copies of old masters could not teach the art of drawing. (3) Intelligent drawing could not begin until a child learned to see forms. Mrs. Hicks had an ardent faith in "sensation" as the key to learning. Her theory was rooted in the works of Pestalozzi, the same educator who fired the mind of Rembrandt Peale. Mrs. Hicks was surely familiar with the writings of the Swiss master, and she incorporated his ideas into *The Prang Course*. As noted earlier, the crusaders picked ideas and pedagogical techniques from Pestalozzi very carefully. They recognized that his general theories led in directions they sought to avoid. Mary Hicks, however, absorbed the master's works. She wanted students to see nature freely—a large goal which guided Pestalozzi throughout his teaching career. Neither did Mrs. Hicks try to simplify a theory of high art. She was first and last an educator.<sup>16</sup>

By the 1880s *The Prang Course* consisted of separate manuals for each grade level. The emphasis on drawing from objects continued through the fourth year. In the fifth grade, students concentrated more on the techniques of drawing, but always working from objects. Perspective loomed as a dominant concern, as did the proper drawing of decorative motifs based on American plants. In the fifth year, students decided on the kind of subject matter they wished to draw. There were three categories: construction,

representation, and decoration. The first referred to forms used in mechanical drafting. The second led to fine art, while the third entered the field of the ornamental arts. Students did not choose their calling immediately, but—theoretically—their talents would begin to show in one of these three areas. Light and shade and color were taught in the final years.<sup>17</sup>

Prang reveled in the orderliness of his manuals; their steplike progression from the lowest to the highest grades would warm the heart of any pedagogue. The neatness of his course won the praise of both European and American educators. By the end of the 1880s, it was claimed that about two million students followed the Prang system.<sup>18</sup>

Although Prang gave Mrs. Hicks and her collaborators credit for "inventing" the new educational techniques, they were most certainly influenced by the child development theories of G. Stanley Hall. Hall (1844–1924), who received a Ph.D. degree from Harvard in 1878, became a leader in experimental psychology during the 1880s, founded the *American Journal of Psychology* in 1887, and was elected the first president of the American Psychological Association in 1891. In 1883 he published *The Contents of Children's Minds*, and through numerous articles established himself as the most renowned educational critic in America. His massive two-volume work, *Adolescence, Its Psychology and Its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education* (1904), sold more than 25,000 copies in America alone.<sup>19</sup>

Hall, for the most part, dismissed rules and formulas. He insisted that children learned according to their "natural interests" and their "individual potential," and that educators should not attempt to force a discipline which children "naturally reject." The methods of Rembrandt Peale, John Rubens Smith, and John Gadsby Chapman were too crude and too direct. Their command that children begin with "the straight line and the regular curve, and with conventional subjects generally," displeased Hall and his followers. One of Hall's students, G. E. Partridge, in his *Genetic Philosophy of Education* (1912), condemned the old methods for "failing to make use of the momentum and imaginative fertility the child would bring to his work." But the new approach, sponsored by Louis Prang, received unending adulation for allowing the child "free choice" and for giving him a "free

hand during the early stages." The successful art teacher, in Hall's mind, "does not insist upon . . . [a] drawing that . . . shall be most pleasing to the teacher." Drawing instruction should stimulate interest and activity, wrote G. E. Partridge, it should not aim to "repress and correct." For this reason, the dictatorial system of the art crusaders was unacceptable. Elementary art education should not be aimed at pleasing adults, but as Partridge observed: "Matter and method must be judged by their value and meaning in the child."<sup>20</sup>

The democratic art of Prang and Hall did not resemble its older counterpart. The crusaders had insisted that everyone could learn to draw by mastering one strict universal system. But Prang disagreed. Democratic drawing, in his opinion, meant that any one could learn to draw, but only by using a flexible approach which suited the needs of each individual. Prang's system measured success by a student's enthusiasm; his art work was almost secondary, for the principles of psychology and pedagogy overruled aesthetic standards. By the mid-1890s Prang's democratic art was an art of relativity and open interpretation. Freedom. Individual Creativity. Personal Standards. Drawing had evolved from a science to an opinion.

Too little research has been done by historians to analyze the impact of the Prang system. We can note, however, that for all practical purposes, the Prang course reversed the crusaders' theories of education. The philosophy of drawing practiced before the Civil War imposed a fixed schema on all students. It was founded on elementary *aesthetic* truths. By 1900, however, *psychology* and *pedagogy*—not aesthetics—determined just how drawing would be presented to the young.

This forfeiture of the classical standards in the drawing books came long after leading American artists had adopted new aesthetic guidelines. From the academic notion that art is the presentation of ideas, many artists moved to the doctrine that one should paint a subject without placing it in a formal straightjacket. A picture should not give the

impression of a preconceived plan, but rather, should evolve from the subject matter. Even before the Civil War Asher Brown Durand, his Hudson River School companions, and numerous transcendentalists called for a closer look at nature before Americans became hopelessly conditioned by European forms.

A critic, writing for *The Nation* on 7 February 1867, reflected this rising disdain for the crusaders' works. "The 'drawing books' of our childhood," he reminisced, contained nothing more than "gates and churns and cottages in coarse outline, followed by the same things 'shaded'." He detested "drawing from the flat," which was an euphemistic expression for "making bad copies of worthless lithographs." A true drawing book, he continued, "did not dwell on static figure types," but encouraged students "to represent things which exist, as they exist." "Copying representations and descriptions of things instead of the things themselves," he regarded as a "vicious" habit which retarded artistic talent.<sup>21</sup>

Other writers probed deeper and began to question the larger concept of a democratic art. One observer, writing in *The Atlantic Monthly* (January 1869), made "A Plea for Culture" by resurrecting James Fenimore Cooper's fears that democracy destroys fine art and makes everything mediocre. "Before the permanent tribunal, copyists and popularizers count for nothing, and even the statistics of common schools are of secondary value. So long as the sources of art . . . are still Transatlantic, we are still a province, not a nation." He called for Americans to give up their democratic art theories, and to build a grand culture on the works of a few native geniuses.

The pressure of these ideas weighed heavily against the art crusade. By the 1860s the drawing books lost their popularity. Naturally the linear style and the controlled line were not forgotten: they simply competed with other systems. After 1870 uniformity gave way to variety and popular drawing books reflected a host of drawing styles.

## The Drawing Books in Perspective

THE ART CRUSADE died with the men who created it. John Rubens Smith, the oldest of the triumvirate, was buried in 1849. A year before, John Gadsby Chapman traded the noise and rush of America for the serenity of the Roman Campagna. Working in Italy for the rest of his life, he completed the *American Drawing Book* in 1857 and then passed out of the public eye. Most importantly, however, it was the death of Rembrandt Peale which terminated the art crusade. His brightly lit museums, his public school drawing classes, and his illustrated lectures had stimulated an interest in *Graphics*. More than any other crusader, he coordinated a host of imaginative activities in an effort to promote the fine arts. There was no *one* artist to replace him. Museums became the preserves of museum specialists, lectures were given by self-styled art historians, and drawing manuals were written by pedagogues. Few men could have done it all. While Peale was far from being a universal genius, his efforts kept him in contact with the very people he sought to educate. *Graphics*, therefore, was the product of his many unique experiences, and was so inextricably bound to Peale himself, that when he passed from the scene any mass interest in his book went with him.

As for the younger enthusiasts, they simply lost their fervor. Fessenden Nott Otis turned from art to medicine. In 1852 he graduated from the New York Medical College where he received a gold medal for his graduation thesis. Until his death in 1900, he worked feverishly as a physician, specializing in genitourinary diseases. One of his treatises, *Structure of the Male Urethra: Its Radical Cure* (1878), embroiled him in heated debates with renowned scholars, a reaction he never encountered with *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing*.<sup>1</sup>

After publishing *Plane and Perspective Drawing*, Jehu Brainerd worked as an engraver as well as a professor of botany, judicial jurisprudence, histology, microscopic anatomy, organic chemistry, and elementary chemistry at three different colleges, including Cleveland's Western College of Home-

opathy, which he helped found in 1849. He published numerous scientific treatises, invented several agricultural machines, patented new tanning procedures, and even designed an ingenious clothes rack.<sup>2</sup>

Like Otis who became totally absorbed in scientific pursuits, Brainerd's professional career mirrored the general mood of the nation. Science and technology, not art, now had first claim on America's energy. By 1860, the leading crusaders had vanished. Only minor figures remained to carry on a battle which had overwhelmed more experienced and talented men. The lack of leadership after the Civil War was most apparent when the drawing promoters began to argue among themselves about the purpose and style of art. Walter Smith found himself battling the art crusader W. N. Bartholomew, and then Smith was attacked by Louis Prang. The important point, however, is that by the 1860s great cracks were appearing in the wall of absolute principles. The art crusaders may have pioneered the cause of a democratic art but they quickly gave way to newcomers and specialists: educators, psychologists, publishers, and illustrators.

The new generation of professional artists—those who might have been expected to pick up where Peale and the others had stopped—paid scant attention to either the promotion of drawing in general, or to the Prang courses in particular. The great art teachers of this era ignored the problem of democratizing art, and spent their days helping young, talented artists reach maturity. Neither William Merritt Chase nor Frank Duvenech saw any reason to write or to publish a popular drawing book. The same was true for John H. Twachtman, J. Alden Weir, and J. Q. A. Ward, all of whom were famous artists who gained solid reputations as inspired teachers.

The meaning of democratic art, itself, changed. Earlier we noted that absolute standards gave way to individual preferences and that Prang—by the 1890s—expressed deep concern over “individual creativity.” This change from the crusaders' rules

to Prang's freedom might have occurred even if professional artists had stayed in touch with art education. Robert Henri, for example, was one of the leading American artists at the start of the twentieth century. Regarded as a radical by the National Academy of Design, his notions about art education paralleled, in a general way, the beliefs of Louis Prang. Like Prang, who emphasized spontaneity and individual genius, Henri insisted that artists should paint any subject in any style. He believed that art should reveal "sensations" instead of preconceived figure types, and—as opposed to Rembrandt Peale and other pre-Civil War crusaders who included lessons on cartography in their manuals—Henri chided: "Don't confuse a drawing with a map." He condemned the crusaders' art style and their pedagogy. "Oh, those long and dreary years of learning to draw!" Henri moaned, insisting that the boredom of drawing straight lines, geometric forms, and ideal figure types killed creativity. "How can a student, after the drudgery of it," he asked rhetorically, "look at a man or an antique statue with any other emotion than a plumbob estimate of how many lengths of head he has." If Henri had written the Prang course, it is conceivable that his lessons would have sympathized with the plans of Mary Dana Hicks or Walter Perry. But, like other artists who directed their democratic sympathies into new channels, he refused to trod the traditional route of the drawing manuals.<sup>3</sup>

William Morris Hunt, the professional artist who in the 1870s won his highest fame as a masterful teacher, went even further than Henri in reacting against the art crusade. The "way to educate artists," is to bring them up in studios, "divorced from everyday affairs." He did not believe that increasing amounts of leisure time would lead to artistic flowering. "As soon as travelling becomes easy," he observed sometime in the late 1870s, "people do not search out new interests but spend their time reading the *Boston Herald*." As for the crusaders' rallying call, Hunt criticized: "To draw! What is it to draw? Any idiot who could learn to write could learn to draw! Not to draw well; for that seems to me to require more skill than anything else in the world." Significantly enough, Hunt did not publish a drawing book. His lectures and guiding thoughts had to be scribbled down secretly by his students and eventually published without his aid.<sup>4</sup>

It is difficult to imagine an attitude toward art education which was more directly opposed to the art crusade than that of William Morris Hunt. Less than 30 years after the appearance of the first complete edition of *The American Drawing Book*, a major American artist was saying that art was not democratic, that it was a special kind of human undertaking for special kinds of people. At the same time, the Prang educational company was publishing drawing books for schools which insisted that art was many things to many people, not a single body of thoughts and symbols. Between them, Prang and Hunt had cut to the heart of the art crusade. Since their time probably thousands of different drawing books have appeared. Many have advanced new ideas and many have repeated older systems. They appear to be everywhere—so many are available that it is difficult to appreciate the importance of the art crusade.

The situation during the first half of the nineteenth century was radically different. Many teachers were itinerant artists who seldom found enough students in any one place to make the instruction profitable. Classes for women which promised to reveal secrets of flower painting were advertised quite often in American newspapers, but these usually meant nothing more than tracing designs from books and prints. At a more utilitarian level, surveyors, soldiers, and civil engineers learned the rudiments of drawing in their apprenticeships, but this training involved little freehand work: a straightedge or compass guided every move. Until the 1850s schools merely paid lip service to art, and few boards of education allocated enough money to pay for a drawing teacher. Some universities advertised art history and drawing instruction just before the Civil War, but their efforts were spotty and erratic. Intelligent drawing instruction was only for those talented few destined to become professional artists. Qualified students sought the tutelage of master painters, but to reach these men, a student needed a firm knowledge of the fundamentals. For these he was left to his own initiative. The American Academy of Art and the National Academy of Design, the two professional institutions for accomplished artists, offered instruction for talented, young aspirants. These classes were intermittent and unstructured, often requiring students to copy "master" drawings and to reproduce the likenesses of

plaster casts molded from antique statuary. Except for an occasional exhibition, the academies made little effort to educate the public.

In light of these conditions, the importance of the American drawing books published before the Civil War is clear. They represent the first serious attempt by professional artists to educate the untrained populace. The consensus among John Rubens Smith, Rembrandt Peale, and John Gadsby Chapman about the definition, the style, and the value of art made the crusade a significant reform movement. The drawing books, themselves, are

the remains from a vibrant age of optimism, of new institutions, of tempered hope, and of cautious faith. Enchanted by the rise of a political democracy, the drawing promoters sought to build an artist democracy of citizens artists: a nation of draftsmen.

At the very least, therefore, the pre-Civil War drawing books may be seen as the seeds of art education in America. And, for the historian, they are something more: a body of words and pictures which reveal a penetrating look into the art and the ideals of nineteenth-century America.

# Appendix

## AMERICAN DRAWING BOOKS, 1820–1860

The following Appendix lists all American drawing books published by or for American authors between 1820 and 1860 that I have been able to locate during three years' search and inquiry. In addition to visiting libraries, museums, and private collections, I have paged through bibliographies of books published in America, looking for any titles which appeared to be drawing books. Unfortunately, many works with the approximate title of *Pencilings Along the Way* proved to be sentimental travel accounts without the slightest hint of a drawing or sketch anywhere. The institutions where each volume I used is to be found and, if I have not myself seen the volume, the work in which it is listed are indicated in the annotation (in brackets) following each volume.

I also found it necessary to eliminate some works that might strictly be called manuals of drawing but which do not relate to the scope of this book. For example, technical works on perspective which were addressed to machinists and ship designers have not been included. George W. Rogers' *The Shipwright's Own Book: Being a Key to Most of the Different Kinds of Lines Made Use of by Ship Builders*

(Pittsburgh: J. M. Millin, 1845) begins with straight lines and progresses to geometrical figures; however, its main purpose is not to promote the fine arts and therefore it has been omitted from the following list. On the other hand, William Minifie's *Text Book of Geometrical Drawing*, because it is addressed to a wider audience, has been included. Of course, there have been borderline cases. My rule has been that if a work (even in part) was addressed to the nonspecialist or the layman interested in art, it was added to my list. Works by foreign authors that were published in America are *not* cited below.

Only one scholar, to my knowledge, has published a list of the American drawing books of the nineteenth century. Chapter two of Carl W. Drepperd's *American Pioneer Arts and Artists* (originally published in 1942) and his *American Drawing Books* (New York: The New York Public Library, 1946) are useful listings which have aided my search. At various points, however, I have disagreed with Drepperd's information. In addition, I have found many manuals for the years 1820–1860 which do not appear in Drepperd's pioneer works. Chances are that other manuals are still to be found.

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The following are books and drawing cards which were personally examined by me and used in my writing.

Abbott, Jacob. *The Studio; or, Illustrations of the Theory and Practice of Drawing, for Young Artists* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1855). [New York Public Library and Library of Congress.]

———. *Cottage Series: Abbott's Drawing Cards* (New York: Saxton and Miles, 1845). [Bowdoin College Library. In the "Memorial Edition" of Jacob Abbott's *Young Christian* (New York, 1882), Edward Abbott included a bibliography of his father's publications. On page 120 the following entries appear:

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- Abbott's Common School Drawing Cards*. Forty cards in a case. New York, 1845.
- Abbott's Drawing Cards*. Elements, Outlines, Landscapes, Cottages, Animals, Heads. Lithographed. Each set 32 cards in case. Boston and New York, 1845.]
- . *Head Series: Abbott's Drawing Cards* (New York: Saxton and Miles, 1845). [American Antiquarian Society.]
- Abbott, Jacob and John S. C. Abbott. *Directions to Accompany Abbott's Series of Drawing Cards* (New York: Saxton and Miles et al., 1845). [American Antiquarian Society.]
- H. B. *Leaf and Flower Pictures and How to Make Them* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1857). [New York Public Library.]
- Bail, Louis. *Bail's Drawing System* (New Haven, Connecticut: the author, 1859). [Library of Congress.]
- . *The Teacher's Guide: An Elementary Drawing System* (New Haven: author, 1858). [Yale University.]
- Ball, R. *Progressive Lessons in Water Color Drawing* (Boston: Thornton and Moff, 1859). [Series number 1, American Antiquarian Society.]
- Ballantine, William. *Kay's Infant and Primary School Reader and Speller* (Philadelphia: J. Kay, jun. & brother; Pittsburgh: C. H. Kay & Co., 1840). [Library of Congress.]
- Bartholomew, William N. *Bartholomew's Progressive Drawing Cards* (Boston: Woolworth, Ainsworth Co., 1860-1863?). [These cards came in sets. Drepperd described No. 1, The Henry Francis Dupont Winterthur Museum owns No. 4.]
- . *Bartholomew's Sketches from Nature, No. (1 to 5)* (Boston: L. H. Bradford & Co., ?). [Boston Public Library. Harry T. Peters, *America on Stone*, notes that Bartholomew advertised at least a dozen manuals, pages 90-91. See card catalog in Library of Congress, and Drepperd.]
- . *Linear Perspective Explained* (Boston: Shepard, Clark and Brown, 1859). [Library of Congress; Winterthur copy dated 1866.]
- . *Bartholomew's Drawing Lessons* (Boston, 1853). [American Antiquarian Society.]
- Bowen, John T. *My Own Sketch Book* (Philadelphia: J. T. Bowen, n.d.). [Paul Mellon Library.]
- . *The United States Drawing Book* (Philadelphia: Thomas Wardle, 1838). [American Antiquarian Society; Winterthur owns 1839 edition.]
- Brainerd, Jehu. *Elementary Principles of Plane and Perspective Drawing* (Cleveland: Tooker & Catchell, 1853). [Smithsonian Institution (Cleveland: Knight, King & Co., 1854), Western Reserve Historical Society.]
- Chapman, John Gadsby. *The American Drawing Book* (New York: J. S. Redfield, 1858). [This manual is located in numerous libraries. The book was published in chapters beginning in 1847. In 1848 a London edition entitled *The Elements of Art* was published (Library of Congress). Ten years after, in 1858, the first "complete" copy appeared. In that year it was also published in London and Edinburgh under the title *The Linear Drawing Book*. S. A. Rollo brought it out in 1859, and W. J. Middleton in 1864. A. S. Barnes published it in 1870, a new edition "carefully revised and corrected by the author." Its final year of publication was

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1877. A special edited version appeared in 1872 by A. S. Barnes & Co., entitled *Elementary Drawing Book* (Smithsonian Institution).]
- Coe, Benjamin H. *A New Drawing Book of American Scenery* (New York: Saxton and Miles; Boston: B. B. Mussey; Philadelphia: John W. Moore; Hartford: E. B. and E. C. Kellogg, 1845). [Winterthur and Library of Congress. Another edition appeared in 1849, Paul Mellon Library and Yale University.]
- . *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing* (Hartford: Robins and Folger, 1840). [Library of Congress and New York State Library, Albany; (Hartford: E. B. and E. C. Kellogg, 1842), New York State Library, Albany and American Antiquarian Society (New York: Saxton and Miles; Boston: Saxton and Pierce, 1843), Winterthur and American Antiquarian Society. Roorbach (1852) cites a "Landscape Drawing Book" by Coe which is probably *Easy Lessons*. . . ]
- . *Drawing Book of Trees* (Hartford: E. B. and E. C. Kellogg, 1841). [Library of Congress and American Antiquarian Society (New York: Saxton and Miles; Boston: Saxton, Pierce and Co., 1843), Winterthur.]
- . *Coe's Drawing Cards For Schools* (New York: ?, 185?). [Harvard University.]
- . *Coe's New Drawing Cards for Schools* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 185?). [Harvard University.]
- . *First Lessons in Perspective* (New York: Saxton and Miles, 1846). [Yale University.]
- . *First Studies in Drawing* (New York: J. Wiley, ca. 1858). [Cornell University, Ithaca.]
- . *The Little Scholar's Drawing Book* (Hartford: E. B. and E. C. Kellogg, 1841). [Library of Congress.]
- . *Coe's New Drawing Lessons—Second Series: Heads, Animals, Figures, Boats and c.* (New York: George P. Putnam, 1852). [Winterthur. —*Third Series*, Drepperd. According to this work there were a total of six books in this one series. They were sold together with drawing cards.]
- Davies, Charles. *A Treatise on Shades and Shadows and Linear Perspective* (New York: J. and J. Harper, 1832). [Winterthur. This work was printed in numerous editions. See National Union Catalog.]
- . *Elements of Drawing and Mensuration . . .* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1846). [Yale University.]
- [DeSilver, R. Wilson.] *The Scholar's Drawing Book* (Philadelphia: R. Wilson DeSilver, 1838). [New York Public Library.]
- Edwards, Thomas. *Edwards' Lithographic Drawing Book* (Boston: Senefelder Lithographic Rooms, 1829). [There were six books in this set. Winterthur owns #1 Figure, #3 Landscape, #6 Landscape.]
- . *Juvenile Drawing Book* (Boston, 1830). [American Antiquarian Society. See Drepperd for 1844 edition.]
- Finn, Matthew D. *Theorematical System of Painting* (New York: James Ryan, 1830). [Library of Congress and Winterthur.]
- Fowle, William B. *The Eye and Hand* (Boston: William B. Fowle, 1847). [American Antiquarian Society; (1849), Boston Public Library.]
- Francoeur, Louis Benjamin. *An Introduction to Linear Drawing*, translated by William B. Fowle (Boston: Cummings,

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- Hilliard, and Co., 1825). [Winterthur; (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins, 1828), Library of Congress.]
- Hill, Mrs. Anne. *Progressive Lessons in Painting Flowers and Fruit* (Philadelphia: Edward C. Biddle, 1845). [Smithsonian Institution.]
- . *The Drawing Book of Flowers and Fruit* (Philadelphia: E. C. Biddle, 1844). [Paul Mellon Library.]
- Holbrook, Josiah. *Self Instructor: No. 1, Child's First Book* (Utica: N. H. Hawley and Co., 1846). [American Antiquarian Society; (Hartford, Connecticut: J. H. Mather & Co., ca. 1846), Yale University.]
- . *First Lessons in Drawing . . .* (n.p., n.d.). [Library of Congress.]
- Hopkins, John Henry. *The Vermont Drawing Book of Landscapes* (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich, 1841). [Winterthur owns parts 4, 6 (6 parts in total). First edition, 1838, title page, Library of Congress. Drepperd notes a 9th edition.]
- Huestis, C. P. *Primary Drawing Book* (New York: C. P. Huestis, 18?). [Winterthur.]
- Kuchel, C. *The Columbian Drawing Book* (Hartford: Belknap and Hamersley, 1849). [Directions by Gervase Wheeler; Winterthur.]
- [Latrobe, John H. B.] *Lucas' Progressive Drawing Book* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, jun'r, 1827). [Copies may be found at the Peabody Library in Baltimore, at Winterthur, and the Library of Congress.]
- Mann, Mary Tyler. *A Primer of Reading, Spelling, and Drawing* (Philadelphia: Hazard, 1851). [Boston Public Library.]
- Metz, C. M. *Studies for Drawing the Human Figure* (Philadelphia: Willis P. Hazard, 182?). [Winterthur.]
- Minifie, William. *A Text Book of Geometrical Drawing* (3rd edition; Baltimore: William Minifie, 1851). [Smithsonian Institution. This work was first published in 1849 and appeared as late as 1875 by D. Van Westrand of New York. There were, apparently, a minimum of 10 editions.]
- . *Popular Lectures on Drawing and Design* (Baltimore: William Minifie, 1854). [New York Public Library and Library of Congress.]
- Mudge, Joseph B. *The American Drawing Book* (Boston: Wm. D. Ticknor and Co., 1843). [Library of Congress.]
- Nutting, Benjamin F. *Initiatory Drawing Cards* (Boston: M. J. Whipple, 1848). [Part II in New York Public Library, 4 parts in one set (1849) at Library of Congress.]
- Osborn, Laughton. *Handbook of Young Artists and Amateurs in Oil Painting* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1845). [University of Chicago Library.]
- Otis, Fessenden Nott. *Easy Lessons in Landscape* (3rd edition; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1851). [New York Public Library. Editions for 1852 and 1856 are located in the Paul Mellon Library. Fifth edition in Library of Congress.]
- . *Studies of Animals* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1866). [Winterthur. First published in 1852.]
- Peale, Rembrandt. *Graphics: A Manual of Drawing and Writing* (New York: J. P. Peaslee, 1835). [The first edition was 1834. Others included (New York: Collins, 1835); (2nd edition, New York: Collins, 1835); (2nd edition, Philadelphia: J. Whetham, 1838); (3rd edition, Philadelphia, J. Whetham, 1838); (Philadelphia: C. Sherman & Co., 1841); (4th edition,

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- Philadelphia: C. Sherman, 1841 and 1842); (Philadelphia: ? , 1845); (Philadelphia: E. C. & J. Biddle, 1850, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1859, 1863, 1866). Copies of *Graphics* are abundant. This information comes from the National Union Catalogue at the Library of Congress.]
- Porter, Rufus. *A Select Collection of Valuable and Curious Arts and Interesting Experiments* (Concord: Rufus Porter, 1825). [Winterthur. At least three editions were printed (Drepperd).]
- Purcell, Edward. *The New York Artist's Class Manual* (drawing cards) (New York: J. C. Riker, ca. 1845). [Purcell published at least 5 sets of cards, each containing several "series." #3 and #5, 3rd series, are located in the Paul Mellon Library.]
- Ropes, Joseph. *Linear Perspective for the Use of Schools* (2nd edition; Portland: author, 1850). [Winterthur and Library of Congress. First edition, 1849, at Smithsonian Institution. Other editions 1854 and 1868.]
- . *Practical Perspective* (Portland: Sanborn & Carter, 1851). [Library of Congress and Smithsonian Institution. At least two editions.]
- . *Progressive Steps in Landscape Drawing* (Hartford: Brackett, Hutchinson & Co. et al, 1853). [New York Public Library.]
- Schmid, Peter. *The Common School Drawing Master* (Boston: E. P. Peabody, 1846). [Library of Congress.]
- Schuster, Sigismond. *Practical Drawing Book for Schools and Self-Instruction* (New York: Newman & Ivison, 1853). [New York Public Library and Winterthur.]
- Seager, E. . . . *Progressive Studies of Landscape Drawing* (Boston: J. H. Bufford, ca. 1847). [American Antiquarian Society.]
- Shattuck, W. B. *The Columbian Drawing Book* (Cincinnati: H. W. Derby and Co., 1848). [Number 1, Library of Congress. (Cincinnati: Bradley and Anthony, 1849), number 2, Winterthur. Also an 1864 edition in the collection of Mrs. Joseph Carson. *Shattuck's Columbian Drawing Cards* are advertised in the Winterthur edition. None have been located.]
- Smith, John Rubens. *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure* (Philadelphia: Samuel M. Stewart, 1831). [New York Public Library.]
- . *The Juvenile Drawing Book* [large, 29 × 47 cm] (Philadelphia: J. T. Brown, 1839). [Avery Library; (Philadelphia: James G. Clark and J. R. Savage, 1845), New York Public Library. First published in 1822. (Philadelphia: J. W. Moore, 1847), Boston Public Library. Eleventh edition at University of Pittsburgh. Also published under the title *Elementary Drawing Book*.]
- . *The Juvenile Drawing Book* [small size, 14 × 11 cm] (Philadelphia: John W. Moore, 1843). [Winterthur and (4th edition, Philadelphia: J. W. Moore, 1845), Library of Congress.]
- . *Chromatology, or the Science of Colours Displayed* (Philadelphia: Smith, 1839). [Free Library of Philadelphia.]
- . *Easy Lessons in Perspective* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins, 1830). [Winterthur, New York Public Library. The author's name is not given but several factors suggest that John Rubens Smith wrote the book. (1) The

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- book is dedicated to John Raphael Smith, presumably John Rubens' father. (2) It is a highly technical work and few men in America could have written it. (3) John Rubens Smith was best known for his lectures on perspective, and it seems certain that he would have published at least one book on the subject. See also John Rubens Smith, *A Synopsis of J. R. Smith's Perspective Lectures* (Boston, 1826), Pennsylvania Museum of Fine Arts.]
- . *A Compendium of Picturesque Anatomy* (Boston: the author, 1827). [John Crerar Library.]
- Smith, Richard Somers. *Manual of Linear Perspective* (New York: J. Wiley, 1851). [Winterthur owns 1864 edition.]
- Smith, Samuel. *Linear Drawing Book* (Philadelphia: E. C. Biddle, 1843). [Library of Congress.]
- Strong, Thomas W. *Drawing without a Master* (Boston: G. W. Cottrell and Co., 1850s?). [Winterthur.]
- Turner, Maria. *Rudiments of Drawing and Shadowing Flowers in Pencil* (Boston: Munroe and Francis; New York: C. S. Francis, 1827). [Winterthur.]
- . *The Young Ladies' Assistant in Drawing and Painting* (Cincinnati: Corey and Fairbank, 1833). [Boston Public Library, Winterthur, and American Antiquarian Society.]
- Whitaker, William J. *A Progressive Course in Inventive Drawing on the Principles of Pestalozzi* (Boston: W. J. Whitaker, 1851). [Smithsonian Institution and Winterthur; and (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1853), Winterthur.]
- Whitney, T. R. *The Young Draftsman's Companion* (New York: D. Mitchell, 1830). [Paul Mellon Library.]
- Winchester, George W. *A Key to Winchester's Drawing and Writing Cards, and Exercises in Perspective* (Hartford: Henry S. Parsons and Co., New York: Mark H. Newman and Co., Boston: Tappan, Wittemore, and Mason, 1849). [Library of Congress. According to Roorbach (1852), *Exercises in Perspective* and *Key to Exercises in Perspective* were also published separately. See also Drepperd, who notes that the cards were published in Hartford, 1849.]
- Author unknown. *Classical Drawing Book* (Philadelphia: S. C. Atkinson, 1833). [Winterthur.]
- . *The New Progressive Drawing Book* (New York: Philip J. Cozans, 1847). [Winterthur (see Dreppard); (New York: Huestis, 1847), American Antiquarian Society.]
- . *My Second Drawing Book* (Philadelphia, New York, Boston: Fisher and Brother, 1850s or early 1860s?). [Winterthur.]
- . *The Youth's New Drawing Book* (New York: C. P. Huestis, 1844). [Winterthur. Several editions appeared in one year (Drepperd). 1848 edition at American Antiquarian Society.]
- . *Aids in Drawing* (?). [Boston Public Library.]
- . *Elementary Studies in Pencil Drawing*, number 59. [Boston Public Library.]
- . *Drawing Book* (Boston: ?, 1839). [Volume II, Boston Public Library.]
- . *The Art of Drawing Landscapes by an Amateur* (Baltimore: F. Lucas, Jr., 1820). [American Antiquarian Society.]
- . *Drawing for Young Children* (New York and Boston: ?, 1841). [American Antiquarian Society; 1848 edition, American Antiquarian Society.]

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- . *The Youth's New Drawing Book* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, Jr., 1830s ?). [Peabody Library.]
- . *The Alphabetical Drawing-Book, and Pictorial Natural History of Quadrupeds* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1847). [New York Public Library.]

## PART II

I found the following books referred to but did not actually see them. Some may exist in the libraries I was unable to visit. Some undoubtedly are not extant. A few may not even be drawing books. I have indicated any doubt in the entry.

- Bartholomew, William N. *Perspective* (Boston: Cyrus G. Cooke, 1855). [Drepperd.]
- . *Drawing Books: A Series of Six Drawing Books, Each with 12 Examples* (Boston: Cyrus G. Cooke, 1855). [Drepperd.]
- Bowen, J. T. *The Child's Drawing Book* (Philadelphia: ?, 1840). [Drepperd.]
- De Silver, R. *Progressive Lessons in Flower Painting* (Philadelphia: ?, 1836). [Drepperd.]
- . *The Elements of Drawing Illustrated by Views . . .* (Philadelphia: ?, 1823). [Drepperd and collection of Mrs. Joseph Carson.]
- Elton, J. C. *Elton's Primary Drawing Book* (New York, ?, ca. 1845). [Drepperd.]
- Field, Thomas W. *University Drawing Book* (?). [Orville A. Roorbach, *Bibliotheca Americana* (New York, 1852).]
- Holbrook, Josiah. *Drawing Cards* (?). [Clarke, volume I, page 830. According to Wm. A. Alcott, *Slate and Blackboard Exercises* (Hartford: Tyler and Porter, 1842), Holbrook published 36 cards in 1839.]
- Howard. *Child's First Book of Reading and Drawing* (?). [Roorbach (1852). This may not be a drawing book.]
- Nutting, Benjamin F. *Pioneer Drawing Cards* (Boston: Higgins and Bradley, 1856). [Drepperd.]
- Otis, Fessendon Nott. *First Lessons in Pencil Drawing* (New York: Appleton & Co., ?). [Roorbach (1852).]
- Peabody, Elizabeth P. *A Method of Teaching Linear Drawing* (?). [Clarke, volume I, pages 11–13.]
- Peabody, Mary T. *Primer of Reading and Drawing* (?). [Clarke, volume I, page 13.]
- Purcell, Edward. *Progressive Lessons in Landscape Drawing* (New York: J. W. Oliver, 1840?). [Drepperd. This was part of a series of books apparently used by Purcell in his New York City drawing academy.]
- Reese, D. M., ed. *First Book in Drawing* (?; Sorin and Ball, ?). [Roorbach (1852).]
- Smith, Miss A. *Drawing Book of Flowers* (?; F. Lucas, Jun., ?). [Roorbach (1852).]
- Strong, Thomas W. *Drawing Book of American Landscapes* (New York: ?, 1847). [Mentioned in Harry T. Peters, *America on Stone*, page 378.]
- Williams, Henry. *Elements of Drawing* (4th edition, Boston, 1828). [American Antiquarian Society.]

## PART II

## READER'S ANNOTATIONS

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- Winchester, G. W. *Drawing Series, in Four Books* (? : Clark and Co., ?). [Roorbach (1852).]
- Author unknown. *Lithographic Drawing Book* (Boston: W. and J. Pendleton, n. d.). [Drepperd.]
- . *Child's First Book of Drawing* (Utica and Hartford: ?, 1846). [Drepperd.]
- . *Slate Pictures for the Useful Selfemployment of Young Children* (?). [Drepperd.]
- . *My First Drawing Book* (New York: Fisher and Brother, ca. 1840–1845 ?). [Drepperd.]
- . *First Book of Drawing* (Philadelphia: ?1846). [Drepperd.]
- . *Album of Drawings* (Philadelphia: John Weik, ?). [Drepperd.]
- . *Lady's Copy Book with Engraved Copies* (?). [Roorbach.]
- . *A New Juvenile Drawing Book* (Philadelphia: ?, 1822). [Drepperd.]
- . *Elementary Drawing-Book* (? : Collins and Bros., ?). [Roorbach (1852).]
- . *Elements of Drawing* (Philadelphia: Robert DeSilver, 1823). [Collection of Mrs. Joseph Carson.]
- . *Picturesque Drawing Book* (Philadelphia: Henry Quig, 1843). [American Antiquarian Society.]

Numerous anonymous packets of drawing cards appeared. See Drepperd publications in "References."

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## Notes

### Chapter One: Primers for a Democratic Art

1. William Dunlap, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), 2 volumes, a reprint of the original 1834 edition, volume II, part 2, page 400.

2. It is not unusual to see Americans of the mid-nineteenth century comparing themselves to ancient Greeks. *Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion*, volume IX, 22 September 1855. George W. Bethune, "Art in the United States," *The Home Book of the Picturesque* (New York: George P. Putnam, 1852). "Historical Society Lectures: The Culture, the Support, and the Objects of Art in a Republic," *New York Daily Times*, 10 December 1852, page 1; Neil Harris, *The Artist in American Society* (New York: George Braziller, 1966), pages 44–45, 202–203; see Charles Edward Lester's quote in Lillian B. Miller, *Patrons and Patriotism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), page 218. See also Dunlap, *The Arts of Design*, volume I, pages 10–12. Even visitors compared America to Greece, Frederick Von Raumer, *America and the American People*, translated by William Turner (New York: J. and H. C. Langley, 1846), page 300.

3. There are earlier American drawing books. Henry Williams, *Elements of Drawing* (Boston: R. P. & C. Williams, 1818), *The Elements of Perspective* (Albany: H. C. Southwick, 1813), and *The Elements of Drawing* (New York: John Low, 1804) are three examples. The last source noted: "The whole comprising a more full and complete introduction to the knowledge of the Graphic Art, than any heretofore published in America." See Card W. Drepperd, *American Pioneer Arts and Artists* (Watkins Glen, New York: Century House, 1970), pages 13–38, and Carl Drepperd, *American Drawing Books* (New York: New York Public Library, 1946). These estimates of the number of manuals are based on information found in the Appendix.

4. See Thomas Hamilton, *Men and Manners in America* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1968), page 381. See also Horatio Greenough's sentiments about European art books in F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), page 141. James D. Hart, *The Popular Book* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), page 94.

5. William Minifie, *A Text Book of Geometrical Drawing* (3rd edition), (Baltimore: William Minifie and Co., 1851), page 3.

6. For a detailed description of the physical appearance of approximately 50 manuals, see Drepperd, *American Pioneer Arts*, pages 13–38, and Drepperd, *American Drawing Books*. Prices are found in numerous newspaper advertisements and on the backs of paperback manuals. See C. P. Huestis, *Primary Drawing Book* (New York: C. P. Huestis, 18 ?), back cover.

*A Catalogue of Valuable and Imported Works Published and for Sale by J. W. Moore* notes that Smith's *Juvenile Drawing Book* (small size) sold for 88¢, while Coe's *Drawing Book of American Scenery* (cloth bound) listed at \$1.25.

7. *The Literary World*, 12 February 1848, pages 29–30. Drawing cards like Jacob Abbott, *Cottage Series* (New York: Saxton and Miles, 1845), emphasized that they were to be used in schools. See the front of the packet of the set at Bowdoin College.

8. Rembrandt Peale, *Graphics* (New York: B. & S. Collins, 1835).

9. *Ibid.*, page 12; *idem. Graphics* (Philadelphia: E. C. & J. Biddle, 1864), pages 1, 19. John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book* (New York: J. S. Redfield, 1858), page iii, altered the phrase to "Any one who can learn to write, can learn to draw." This became the popular version. See, for example, Fessenden Nott Otis, *Easy Lessons in Landscape* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1851), page 1; William Minifie, *Popular Lectures on Drawing and Design* (Baltimore: William Minifie, 1854), page 9. See also C. Kuchel, *The Columbian Drawing Book* (Hartford: Belknap and Hamersley, 1849), page 6; Benjamin H. Coe, *A New Drawing Book of American Scenery* (New York: Saxton and Miles; Boston: B. B. Mussey; Philadelphia: John W. Moore; Hartford: E. B. and E. C. Kellogg, 1845), page iii; John T. Bowen, *The United States Drawing Book* (Philadelphia: Thomas Wardle, 1839), preface. The newspapers that reviewed the manuals also picked up this idea. W. B. Shattuck, *The Columbian Drawing Book* (Cincinnati: Bradley and Anthony, 1849), inside of front cover, quotes the *Cincinnati Herald*.

10. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 22.

11. Hiram Powers, *Statue of the Greek Slave* (New York: R. Craighead, 1847), page 3. A. T. Gardner, *Yankee Stonecutters* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1945), pages 13–16.

12. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, pages 84, 85.

13. John Rubens Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure* (Philadelphia: Samuel M. Stewart, 1831), preface and plates XIV and XX.

14. Sigismond Schuster, *Practical Drawing-Book* (New York: Newman and Iveson, 1853), page 2.

15. Schuster, *Practical Drawing-Book*, page 3.

16. William Minifie, *Three Lectures on Drawing and Design* (Baltimore: William Minifie, 1854), page 3.

17. James Mulhern, *A History of Secondary Education in Pennsylvania* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), page 422.

18. Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, preface.

19. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 10.

20. Mulhern, *Secondary Education in Pennsylvania*, page 429.

21. This was a common theme. See, for example, William J. Whitaker, *A Progressive Course of Inventive Drawing*... (Boston: W. J. Whitaker, 1851), pages 5, 6; Schuster, *Practical Drawing-Book*, page 3; Jehu Brainerd, *Elementary Principles of Plane and Perspective Drawing* (Cleveland: Tooker and Gatchell, 1853), page 6; Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 7.

22. Minifie, *Three Lectures on Drawing and Design*, page 3.

23. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 4.

24. See Peter C. Marzio, *The Art Crusade* (doctoral dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1969), page 80.

25. John A. Kouwenhoven, *The Arts in Modern American Civilization* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1967), pages 76-78.

26. *Ibid.*, page 87.

27. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, pages 3-10.

28. *Classical Drawing Book* (Philadelphia: S. C. Atkinson, 1833), introduction:

Rocks, mountains, fields, woods, rivers, cataracts, cities, towns, castles, houses, fortifications, ruins, or whatever else may present itself to view in our travels, may be thus brought home, and preserved for future use, either in the way of business, or elegant conversation.

29. Benjamin H. Coe, *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing* (New York: Saxton and Miles et al., 1845), page 1; Shattuck, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, inside cover.

30. John Rubens Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, preface.

31. Calvert Vaux, *Villas and Cottages* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1857), page 16. Vaux did not publish a drawing book but his ideas did echo the crusaders' sentiments.

32. Michel Chevalier, *Society, Manners, and Politics in the United States*, translated by T. G. Bradford (Boston: Weeks, Jordan & Co., 1839), page 433.

33. *Putnam's Monthly*, volume VIII (July 1856), page 109.

34. Charles Baker, *The American Art Union* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1936), page 104.

35. William Cullen Bryant, *To Cole, the Painter, Departing for Europe* as quoted in James Thomas Flexner, *That Wilder Image* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1962), page ix.

36. James Jackson Jarves, *Art Hints: Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1855), page 316.

37. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 9. Peale, *Graphics* (1835), page 11, noted: "In America, more than any other country, it is necessary to bestow on the rising generations the advantages of a good education."

38. Joseph B. Mudge, *The American Drawing Book* (Boston: Wm. D. Tickner & Co., 1843), preface.

39. [John H. B. Latrobe], *Lucas' Progressive Drawing Book* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, jun'r, 1827), page vi.

## Chapter Two: The Artist as a Public Man

1. Joel R. Poinsett, *Discourse, on the Objects and Importance of The National Institution for the Promotion of Science* (Washington: P. Force, 1841).

2. *Putnam's Monthly*, volume I (June 1853), pages 700-703.

3. Speech by George Bancroft at *The Ceremony of the Laying of the Corner-Stone of the New Edifice of the National Academy of Design*... October 21, 1863, edited by T. Addison Richards (New York: Sackett and Cobb, 1864), page 16.

4. James Fenimore Cooper to Horatio Greenough, 25 June 1843, as quoted in *The Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper*, edited by James Franklin Beard (6 volumes; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964), volume IV, pages 389-390. See similar sentiments in James Fenimore Cooper, *The American Democrat* (Cooperstown: H. & E. Phinney, 1838), page 64, and *The Sea Lions* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), page 11. James Fenimore Cooper, *Notions of the Americans* (2 volumes; New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1963), volume II, page 94.

5. Reliable material on John Rubens Smith has been difficult to locate. A useful source is Edward S. Smith, "John Rubens Smith" (unpublished manuscript, New York Public Library), 130 typed pages. A shorter version, with 9 illustrations, appeared in *The Connoisseur*, volume LXXXV (May 1930), pages 300-307. Both articles are biased in favor of J. R. Smith, and therefore must be used with caution. Another source is "Reminiscences of John R. Smith," *The Crayon*, volume II (7 November 1855), page 287.

6. Algernon Graves, *A Dictionary of Artists Who Have Exhibited in the Principal London Exhibitions of Oil Paintings from 1760-1880* (London: Henry Graves & Co., 1906).

7. Edward Smith gives this date and his evidence seems good. The *D. A. B.* noted that J. R. Smith was in America by 1809.

8. In the first year, according to Edward Smith, there were 107 women and 24 men in his classes. They were taught according to levels of ability in groups of 8 to 10.

9. Anna Rutledge, "Artists in the Life of Charleston," *American Philosophical Society, Transactions*, volume XXXIX, part 2 (November 1949), page 129.

10. "Reminiscences of John R. Smith," page 287, Edward Smith's manuscript, page 17.

11. *National Advocate*, 10, 12, 16, 18, 20, 23, 25, 27, 30 September 1817; 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 21, 28 October 1817; 4, 8 November 1817. Smith's references to art treatises and European artists show his knowledge of the history, the theory, and the practice of painting. For Smith's virtual hatred of Dunlap see letter of John Rubens Smith to John Trumbull, July 1817, New York (Henry Francis Dupont Winterthur Museum, Joseph Downs manuscript collection). For Dunlap's reprisals see Dunlap, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*, volume II, pages 37, 259, 277.

12. There is a sixth book which Smith may have written. See "Appendix," page 75.

13. Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, preface.

14. Edward Smith's manuscript, pages 44, 46, 79; John Rubens Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, preface.

15. I am indebted to Mr. John Mahey for sharing his research with me. The *D. A. B.* and George C. Groce and David H. Wallace, *The New-York Historical Society's Dictionary of Artists in America, 1564-1860* (New Haven and London: Yale

University Press, 1957) contain useful biographies of Peale. Both seem to rely heavily on Peale's "Reminiscences" in *The Crayon*, 10 January 1855; 29 August, 19 September, 3 October 1855; January, April, June 1856; February, September, October, November, December 1857; February 1860. The "Reminiscences" are filled with inaccuracies, however, for Peale was relying on his memory. Other general accounts which are helpful if used with caution include C. Edwards Lester, *The Artists of America; Dunlap, History . . . of the Arts of Design*, volume II (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1846). Peale did not hold Dunlap's history in high regard. He called it "a hodge podge." Thomas Sully, Peale's close friend, also viewed it as a "worthless production" and had "given it away." Rembrandt Peale to editors of *The Crayon*?, Philadelphia, 8 September n.d. (but probably 1854 or 1855; copy owned by John Mahey). See also Rembrandt Peale to Hillman and Durand, Philadelphia, 22 July 1855 (Morristown National Historical Park, Morristown, N. J., L. W. Smith collection). For an obituary see *The Crayon*, volume VIII, pages 328, 333-335.

16. Quoted in Charles Coleman Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale, 1790-1827* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1947), page 273.

17. The number of paintings is based on research by John Mahey, who worked for several years preparing a catalog of Peale's paintings. See *Catalogue of Valuable Original Paintings by the Late Rembrandt Peale* (Philadelphia: W. B. Selheimer, 1862) for works remaining in Peale's possession after his death. For a catalog by Peale see *Catalogue of Peale's Italian Pictures, Now Exhibiting at Sully and Earle's Gallery* (Philadelphia, 1831) and *Description of the Court of Death* (Baltimore: J. Robinson, n.d.). *Crayon* articles. Books: *Notes on Italy* (Philadelphia: Carey and Lea, 1831), *Graphics* (see Appendix), *Portfolio of an Artist* (Philadelphia: H. Perkins; Boston: Perkins & Marvin, 1839). Sellers noted on page 388 that Peale wrote an *Introduction to Graphics*. I have not been able to locate this work. One of his earliest publishing ventures was a satirical poem, Solomon Irony, Esq., *Fashion; or The Art of Making Breeches* (Philadelphia: Francis and Robert Bailey, 1800). Toward the end of his life he wrote a poem *Faith and Hope*, which was published after his death (New York: G. Schirmer, 1866). See also Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale*, pages 437-438. Peale was seldom bashful about his own talents. He wrote at one time, "I cannot but consider myself competent to teach every branch of . . . Art, because not only have I practiced them all, but I have had Pupils to whom I have taught them." Rembrandt Peale to Thomas Jefferson, New York, 7 December 1825 (Massachusetts Historical Society).

18. Rembrandt Peale to Mary J. Peale, 2 June ? (American Philosophical Society). This same idea was expressed continually in *Graphics*.

19. Charles Willson Peale to Rembrandt Peale, 28 August 1823, as quoted in Charles Coleman Sellers, *Portraits and Miniatures by Charles Willson Peale* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1952), page 13.

20. *Ibid.*, page 9.

21. Peale, *Portfolio*, page 54.

22. Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy, *De arte graphica; or the Art of Painting*, was translated into English as early as 1695 (London: J. Hoptinstall). It reappeared continually in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rembrandt probably

learned of *De arte graphica* from his father (Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale*, page 10). Some of the treatise was included in an American manual *The Theory of Effect* (Philadelphia: J. W. Moore, 1851), pages 127-141.

23. Rembrandt Peale to James McKnown, New York, 25 November 1835 (Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Joseph Downs manuscript collection); Rembrandt Peale to St. Van Rensselaer, New York, 26 November 1835 (copy owned by John Mahey).

24. Rembrandt Peale to T. H. Burrows, Philadelphia, 14 December 1837 (copy owned by John Mahey).

25. Rembrandt Peale to G. M. Wharten, Philadelphia, 15 June 1844 (copy owned by John Mahey).

26. *Ibid.*

27. Rembrandt Peale to Daniel Lippincott, 1841 (copy owned by John Mahey). Peale's reference to Childs is probably the English author whose drawing books were imported to America and published by companies in the United States. Some of the American editions do not indicate that the author is English and he has been mistakenly identified as an American. See Drepper publications.

28. "Philadelphia Museum," Rembrandt Peale, 5 January 1835 (American Philosophical Society).

29. "Reminiscences," *The Crayon*, volume I (13 June 1855), page 370. Peale helped to illuminate Baltimore with gas lamps.

30. Like Smith and Peale, John Gadsby Chapman lacks an adequate biography. Mr. William Campbell of the National Gallery of Art has generously shared his research, his copies of "The Kemble Papers," and his partially completed manuscript on Chapman with me. The most reliable of the published sources is William P. Campbell, *John Gadsby Chapman: Painter and Illustrator* (Washington, D. C.: The National Gallery of Art, 1962). Others include Henry T. Tuckerman, *American Artist-Life or, Sketches of American Painters* (New York: D. Appleton & Co.), 1847, pages 216-222; "John Gadsby Chapman and Conrad Wise Chapman," *Bulletin of the Virginia State Library*, volume XIII, July-October 1919, pages 77-104; Cummings, *N. A. D.*, page 198; Eliot Clark, *History of the National Academy of Design* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), page 60; Dunlap, *History . . . of the Arts of Design*, volume III, pages 244-246; Samuel Isham, *A History of American Painting* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927); and Virgil Barker, *American Painting* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950); George S. Chamberlain, "John Gadsby Chapman, Painter of Virginia," *The Art Quarterly*, winter 1961, pages 378-390.

31. *The Literary World* (6 February 1847), page 19.

32. *The Knickerbocker* (May 1847), page 482.

33. *The Crayon* (December 1859), page 380. The editors, W. J. Stillman and John Durand, were less rule-oriented in their view of art.

34. For other reviews and opinions of Chapman's works, see *The Literary World* (24 April 1847), page 185; for Samuel F. B. Morse's opinion, *The Literary World* (29 May 1847), page 401; John W. Francis, *Old New York* (New York: W. J. Widdleton, 1866), page 286, called Chapman's book "the most scientific and practically valuable treatise . . . yet published"; in the *Minutes of the National Academy of Design, 1889*, it was noted that *The American Drawing Book* was "familiar to all the students of the time."

35. *New York Herald* (December 1840), page 2; *Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper*, edited by James Franklin Beard (6 volumes; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1960), volume I, pages 389–390. After copying Guido's "Aurora" (ca. 1830) Cooper called Chapman a man "who promises very well as a painter," page 430. In another letter, Cooper wrote that Chapman "sketches ably and aspires to History," volume I, page 433. See also volume II, pages 54 and 115. James Grant Wilson, *Bryant and His Friends* (New York: Fords, Howard, and Hulbert, 1888), page 97.

36. Dunlap, *The Arts of Design*, volume II, part 2, page 437.

37. Quoted in Lois Marie Fink, "Chapman's *American Drawing Book* of 1947 in Relation to the Popular Taste of the 1840s in the United States," (unpublished master's thesis, University of Chicago, June 1955), page 5.

38. Cummings, *N. A. D.*, page 148; Tuckerman, *American Artist-Life*, page 218.

39. M. C. Meigs to Gouverneur Kemble, Cold Spring, New York, 24 April 1854, as quoted in Charles Edwin Fairman, *Art and Artists of the Capital of the United States of America* (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1927), page 150; John Gadsby Chapman, "Drawing in Public Schools," *The Crayon*, volume VI (January 1859), page 1.

40. John Gadsby Chapman, "Drawing in Public Schools," page 3; John Gadsby Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 4.

41. John Gadsby Chapman to Gouverneur Kemble, Rome, 28 February 1854 (Office of the Architect of the Capitol).

42. J. K. Paulding to Rufus W. Griswold, New York, 2 January 1843, *The Letters of James Kirke Paulding*, edited by Ralph M. Aderman (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), pages 324–325. See also *Graham's American Monthly Magazine of Literature, Art, and Fashion* (May 1843), page 367.

43. Tuckerman, *American Artist-Life*, page 217.

44. John Gadsby Chapman to William Kemble, Washington, September 1841 (Kemble papers); William S. Mount's diary (negative photostat), 29 December 1846 (New-York Historical Society).

45. John Gadsby Chapman to William Kemble, Rome, 23 June 1860 (Kemble papers). Chapman wrote: "The hardest part of the business has been that the time I have taken to [do] the work . . . has been when I had more of other work on hand than I could execute—and when I was compelled often to decline commissions for incapacity to fulfill them as required. . . ."

46. John Gadsby Chapman to William Kemble, Washington, 12 September 1841 (Kemble papers).

47. John Gadsby Chapman to William Kemble, Rome, 7 January 1865 (Kemble papers).

48. *The Crayon* (December 1859), page 379 noted "Mr. Chapman went to Rome in 1848, chiefly for the benefit of his health as well as to paint in the tranquil, social atmosphere of Rome, and to conveniently mature important artistic projects." In a letter to William Kemble, Rome, 23 June 1860 (Kemble papers) he wrote that he felt as if he did his work "with almost one foot in the other world, and under circumstances to [sic] painful to recall to memory."

49. John Gadsby Chapman to William Kemble, Rome, 14

April 1866 (Kemble papers). Chapman wrote that he wished to sell the drawing book and "devote the rest of my life to the pursuit of quiet professional labour only—"

### Chapter Three: Learning to See

1. Henry Ladd, *The Victorian Morality of Art: An Analysis of Ruskin's Esthetic*. (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1968), page 18.

2. Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on the Fine Arts* (London: C. Whittingham, 1842), page 11.

3. Quoted in Ladd, page 68.

4. Reynolds, *Discourses*, page 37.

5. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 57.

6. *Ibid.*, page 287.

7. Thomas Edwards, *Juvenile Drawing Book or Instructions in Landscape Drawing* (Boston: Benjamin Perkins, 1844), title page.

8. *Pictures and Painters* (New York: George P. Putnam, 1849), page 48.

9. Peale, *Graphics* (1835), page 6.

10. Coe, *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing*, page 1.

11. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 24.

12. Pestalozzi's basic ideas about the relationship of morality, education, and drawing are found in three books: *Buch der Mütter* (Zürich and Bern: Heinrich Gessner, 1803), *A B C der Anschauung* (2 volumes; Zürich and Bern: Heinrich Gessner, 1803), and *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, translated by Lucy E. Holland and Francis C. Turner (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1915). Pestalozzi's writings should not be treated as one tight philosophical system. While there is an essential core to his thinking, the Swiss master himself admitted there were inconsistencies and vague generalizations in his work.

13. Pestalozzi, *Buch der Mütter*, pages 1–66.

14. Pestalozzi, *Gertrude*, pages 116–122.

15. *Ibid.*, pages 122–132.

16. *Ibid.*, page 67.

17. Pestalozzi, *A B C der Anschauung*, volume I, table 1; volume II, tables 2 and 3.

18. Pestalozzi, *Gertrude*, page 51.

19. *Ibid.*, pages 81, 85.

20. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 42.

21. H. G. Good, *A History of American Education* (2nd edition; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962), page 171.

22. "Pestalozzi," *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, volume VI, 6 June 1806, 9 June 1806, 30 June 1806, has a biographical sketch. Adolphe Meyer, *An Educational History of the American People* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1957), page 226. Good, *A History of American Education*, pages 172, 173. *The Connecticut Common School Journal*, volume II (August 1840), pages 293–311.

23. Meyer, *An Educational History of the American People*, pages 226, 227.

24. Peale, *Graphics* (1864), pages 20, 21.

25. *Ibid.*, page 21. For similar sentiments, see Coe, *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing*, introduction, plates 3 and 4; C. P. Huestis, *Primary Drawing Book*, back cover; Shattuck, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, inside cover; Coe, *A New Drawing Book of American Scenery*, volume III. See also *Graphics* (Collins, 1835), page 16, where Peale quotes Profes-

sor Leiber's report to the trustees of the Girard College: "... persons who never see attentively, and whose eyes convey but dim images to the mind, never become good observers and seldom close reasoners; nor does their memory long retain those ill defined images and superficial impressions."

26. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, pages 102, 108.
27. *Ibid.*, pages 5, 6, 12, 13. For the same view regarding the relationship between drawing and the appreciation of nature see Coe, *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing*, introduction; C. Kuchel, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, page 3; Shattuck, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, inside cover.
28. Brainerd, *Plane and Perspective Drawing*, pages 6, 9–18; Schuster, *Practical Drawing Book*, pages 1–4.

#### Chapter Four: Drawing by Formula

1. Peale, *Graphics* (1864), pages 6, 26. See also Coe, *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing*, introduction, plate 1; *An Introduction to Linear Drawing*, edited by William B. Fowle (Boston: Cummings, Hilliard, and Co., 1825), pages 2–4; Fessenden Nott Otis, *Studies of Animals* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1866), number 1, plates 1, 2, 3; *Classical Drawing Book*, introduction; C. P. Huestis, *Primary Drawing Book*, inside front cover; *Lucas' Progressive Drawing Book*, page 5; Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 14; and John Gadsby Chapman, "Drawing in the Public Schools," *The Crayon*, volume VI (January 1859), pages 1–4; *The Theory of Effect*, pages 10–11. For an almost direct copy of Chapman see Brainerd, *Plane and Perspective Drawing*, pages 9–12.
2. Fink, "Chapman's *American Drawing Book* of 1847 in Relation To The Popular Taste Of The 1840's In The United States," page 10.
3. Peale, *Graphics* (1849), page 27.
4. Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, introduction. This emphasis on the "correct eye" may be found also in Coe, *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing*, introduction; Huestis, *Primary Drawing Book*, inside of covers; Kuchel, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, page 3; and Bowen, *The United States Drawing Book*, page 5.
5. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, pages 16–18; Peale, *Graphics* (1864), pages 31–36; Minifie, *Geometrical Drawing* (1851), pages 9–11; Coe, *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing*, plate 2; *An Introduction to Linear Drawing*, edited by William B. Fowle, pages 4–40; and Brainerd, *Plane and Perspective Drawing*, pages 13–24.
6. The phrase varies slightly from author to author. Peale, *Graphics* (1864), page 22; Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, plate VII, and Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 22.
7. Peale, *Graphics* (1864), page 28.
8. Coe, *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing*, plate 1.
9. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 21; Peale, *Graphics* (B. & S. Collins, 1835), pages 26–36; Brainerd, *Plane and Perspective Drawing*, pages 14–18; Minifie, *Geometrical Drawing*, page 7, plate 1; *Lucas' Progressive Drawing Book*, plate 2.
10. Brainerd, *Plane and Perspective Drawing*, page 14.
11. Coe, *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing*, plate 8.
12. Kuchel, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, page 3.
13. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, pages 25, 26.

For a similar type of formula see Peale, *Graphics* (1864), page 101.

14. Brainerd, *Plane and Perspective Drawing*, page 24.
15. Peale, *Graphics* (1864), pages 82, 83; Brainerd, *Plane and Perspective Drawing*, pages 26, 27.
16. Bowen, *The United States Drawing Book*, page 5.
17. *Ibid.*, pages 9, 10. Similar instructions were given in Coe, *Easy Lessons in Landscape Drawing*, introduction; *Classical Drawing Book*, introduction.
18. *Lucas' Progressive Drawing Book*, plate IX.
19. Otis, *Studies of Animals*, plates I–III.
20. Peale, *Graphics* (1864), page 101.
21. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, pages 84–86.
22. Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, preface. Similar words were written by Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 42.
23. Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, plate XXI.
24. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, pages 88, 89; Brainerd, *Plane and Perspective Drawing*, page 51.
25. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 90.
26. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, pages 71, 72. For other examples of "perfect" body parts, see Edwards, *Edwards' Lithographic Drawing Book*, number 1; Coe, *Drawing for Schools*, plates 1–26; Bowen, *The United States Drawing Book*, pages 5, 6.
27. Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, preface.
28. Coe, *Drawing Book of Trees*, page 122.
29. Otis, *Easy Lessons in Landscape*, pages 1, 2.
30. Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, preface.
31. *Ibid.*, plate II.
32. *Classical Drawing Book*, introduction. See also *The Theory of Effect*, pages 15–22.
33. Benjamin H. Coe, *Drawing Book of Trees* (Hartford: E. B. and E. C. Kellogg, 1841), plate I.
34. *Ibid.*, plate I.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Charles Davies, *A Treatise on Shades and Shadows...* (New York: J. and J. Harper, 1832), page iv. Davies taught drawing to the cadets at West Point.

#### Chapter Five: Can Anyone Learn to Draw?

1. *Scientific American* (29 May 1847), page 228. Porter's biography is given in Jean Lipman, *Rufus Porter: Yankee Pioneer* (New York: Potter, 1968). For patents on drawing apparatus, including perspective machines, see *Subject-Matter Index of Patents for Inventions Issued by the United States Patent Office from 1790 to 1873, Inclusive* (3 volumes, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1874), volume I, pages 457, 458.
2. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 125.
3. *Ibid.*, pages 130, 135.
4. Ropes, *Practical Perspective*, page 3.
5. *Ibid.*, page 13.
6. *Ibid.*, pages 14, 15.
7. Shattuck, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, plate 1, figure 1.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Kuchel, *The Columbian Drawing Book*, page 6.

10. John Varley, *A Practical Treatise on Perspective* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, Jr., ca. 1820); James W. Foster, "Fielding Lucas, Jr., Early 19th Century Publisher of Fine Books and Maps," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, October 1955, page 195, notes that Varley's work was on sale as early as 1819.

11. The inventory of Rembrandt Peale's estate (The Peale Museum) notes item No. 58, a "Lot of Sketches by Varley." The catalog for the estate sale (1862) notes in No. 27 "7 Sketches of Varley's Drawings, three on a sheet."

12. Simeon DeWitt, *The Elements of Perspective* (Albany: H. C. Southwick, 1813), see introduction.

13. Inside cover of Shattuck's *The Columbian Drawing Book*.

14. Thomas Cole, quoted in Louis L. Noble, *The Course of Empire, Voyage of Life, and Other Pictures of Thomas Cole, N.A.* (New York: Cornish, Lamport, 1853), page 336.

15. Otis, *Easy Lessons in Landscape*, pages 19, 20. See Varley, *A Practical Treatise on Perspective*, page 5.

16. *Pictures and Painters*, pages 13, 14.

17. Coe, *A New Drawing Book of American Scenery*, plate VIII.

18. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, pages 287-304.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. Coe, *A New Drawing Book of American Scenery*, plate VIII.

22. *Ibid.*, plate VIII.

23. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, pages 287-304.

#### Chapter Six: Emerson, Ruskin, and the Art Crusade

1. Peale, *Graphics* (1864), pages 22, 23.

2. *The Knickerbocker*, volume XXIX (May 1847), page 482.

3. *The Literary World*, 12 February 1848, pages 29, 30.

4. As Chapman wrote in *The Crayon*, volume VI (January 1859), page 2, drawing was "too long regarded" as a "mysterious art."

5. "Art," *Emerson's Complete Works*, edited by J. E. Cabot (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1883), volume II, pages 327-343. See also in Cabot, "Nature" (1836), volume I, pages 20-30; "The American Scholar" (1837), volume I, pages 81-116; "Self-Reliance" (1841), volume II, pages 45-88; *The Natural History of the Intellect*, volume XII, pages 1-60. See also, Orestes A. Brownson, "Emerson," *The Transcendentalists*, edited by Perry Miller (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950), pages 431-435. For a broader context see Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (2nd edition, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), pages 352-354.

6. "Statuary," *North American Review*, volume XXXII (January 1831), page 18.

7. "Art," *The United States Democratic Review*, volume XLI (May 1858), page 389.

8. See chapters VIII and IX.

9. "Art," *U. S. Democratic Review*, pages 388, 389.

10. Smith, *A Key to the Art of Drawing the Human Figure*, introduction.

11. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, page 34.

12. For a concise analysis of the transcendental view of art see Harris, *The Artist in American Society*, pages 170-186. [Ralph Waldo Emerson], "Thoughts on Art," *The Dial*, volume I (January 1841), page 368. George Willis Cooke, "The Dial: An Historical and Biographical Introduction. . . ." *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, volume XIX (July 1885), pages 225-265. Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau quoted in Harris, *The Artist in American Society*, page 178. Miller, *Patrons and Patriotism*, pages 27, 28. Emerson, "Self-Reliance," volume II, pages 47-87.

13. Quoted in Roger B. Stein, *John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America, 1840-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pages 103-104.

14. Quoted in Miller, *Patrons and Patriotism*, page 28; Stein, *John Ruskin*, pages 101-123.

15. John Gadsby Chapman to Thomas Sully, Florence, 27 July 1829 (Kemble papers).

16. John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice* (3 volumes, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1890), volume I, page 217 n.

17. John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (Kent: George Allen, 1888), pages 40, 61, 80.

18. John Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1857). I have used *The Elements of Drawing* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1867), page xi.

19. *Ibid.*, page xiii.

20. *Ibid.*, page 22.

21. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, page xxxiii.

22. Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing*, page 123.

23. Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing*, page xiv.

24. These phrases are from Franklin B. Dexter's review of volume one of *Modern Painters*, *North American Review*, LXVI (January, 1848), pages 110 ff.

#### Chapter Seven: From Art to Education

1. William Minifie, *Three Lectures on Drawing and Design* (Baltimore: William Minifie, 1854), page 5.

2. The basic history of early art education in America is Isaac Edwards Clarke, *Art and Industry* (3 volumes, Washington, D. C.: W. H. Morrison, 1885). See also Francis Bland Belshe, "A History of Art Education in the Public Schools of the United States" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1946); Charles Alpheus Bennett, *History of Manual and Industrial Education up to 1870* (Peoria, Illinois: Manual Arts Press, 1926), pages 407-439; Royal Bailey Farnum, "Present Status of Drawing and Art in the Elementary and Secondary Schools of the United States," *United States Bureau of Education Bulletin*, number 13 (1914), pages 10-14; James Parton Haney, *Art Education in the Public Schools of the United States* (New York: American Art Annual, 1908).

3. Clarke, *Art and Industry*, volume I, pages 13-30; Farnum, "Present Status of Drawing," page 13.

4. Reprinted in Clarke, *Art and Industry*, volume I, pages 16-18.

5. *Common School Journal*, 1 March, 1839, page 68; 15 May 1839, page 156; 1 June 1840, pages 171, 172; 1 June 1841, page 186; 15 July 1842, pages 209-212; 15 August 1843, pages 241-243; 15 June 1844, pages 198-200; 1 July 1844, pages 203-207; 15 July 1844, pages 229-232; 15 August 1844, pages 255-263; 2 September 1844, pages 273-279; 1 October 1844, pages 305-

312; 1 November 1844, pages 338–343; 15 November 1844, pages 354–360; 2 December 1844, pages 368–373; 16 December 1844, pages 386–390; 15 January 1845, pages 25–29; 1 February 1845, pages 42–45; 15 July 1845, pages 222–224; 1 August 1845, pages 233–234; 15 August 1845, pages 252–254; 1 September 1845, pages 263–266; 15 September 1845, pages 276–280; 15 December 1845, pages 370–382; 1 April 1844, page 118; 15 April 1844, pages 132–134. *Life and Works of Horace Mann*, edited by Mary Mann (5 volumes, Boston: Horace B. Fuller, 1868), volume III, page 329.

6. Joseph Ropes, *Linear Perspective for the Use of Schools*, page 1.

7. Clarke, volume I, pages 2, 3.

8. Henry Barnard, *National Education in Europe* (2nd edition; Hartford: Case, Tiffany, & Co., 1854), pages 66–68.

9. See, for example, *The American Journal of Education*, August 1856, pages 241, 250, 258; September 1856, pages 409–434; December 1856, pages 587–592, 629–641; September 1857, pages 191–198, 247, 250, 251, 253–256; March 1858, pages 769–783; June 1858, pages 710–714; September 1858, page 588; December 1858, page 796. *Connecticut Common School Journal*, volume IX, pages 64, 65; volume X, pages 225–229.

10. Clarke, *Art and Industry*, volume I, pages 4–13, William A. Alcott, *Slate and Black Board Exercises* (Hartford: Tyler and Porter, 1842), pages 197–200, 205.

11. Miss J. H. Stickney, *Teacher's Guide: Companion to Bartholomew's Primary School Drawing Cards* (Boston and Chicago: Woolworth, Ainsworth and Co. 1869), page 4.

12. *Ibid.*, pages 3–81.

### Chapter Eight: Industrial Art and Psychology

1. Clarke, volume I, page 207.

2. *Ibid.*, volume I, pages 204–219.

3. *Ibid.*, volume I, pages 260–280. Even John Gadsby Chapman could not resist the apparent rewards offered by textbook publishers. Disappointed by the financial reverses of *The American Drawing Book*, he sought in the 1860s “to prepare a series of cheaper and more popular school books—based upon and deriving their . . . [principles] from the [Drawing] Book.” Unlike *The American Drawing Book*, these smaller versions would contain blank pages with “short instructions for ready and convenient application in schools.” Similar books were being published for the Boston schools by William Bartholomew, and Chapman’s idea, apparently, was to capture the market in New York City. Chapman also intended to publish “Drawing Cards” which would be “intimately based” upon *The American Drawing Book*. These plans never materialized, but they do show that leading art crusaders were not averse to receiving financial rewards for their efforts. Writing from Rome to his friend and occasional business advisor, William Kemble, Chapman emphasized his basic motive: “If I was only with you again [in America]—with the association of an efficient publisher I am convinced the book might be made profitable. . . .” Chapman believed that his proposed “copy books” would sell if the publishers advertised their “practical utility.” For this claim alone, argued Chapman,

would put his works in “a reliable position as a standard work,” and insure them of lucrative sales.

4. Clarke, *Art and Industry*, volume I, page 40.

5. *Ibid.*, volumes I, IX–CCLVIII.

6. See the introductory remarks in Walter Smith, *Industrial Drawing in Public Schools* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1875), Walter Smith, *Teachers' Manual for Freehand Drawing in Intermediate Schools* (Boston: J. R. Osgood and Co., 1875), and Walter Smith, *Preliminary Manual for Instruction in Drawing-Books Nos. 1 to 5* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1880). Walter Smith, *Examples of Household Taste* (New York: R. Worthington, 1878), page 4, and Walter Smith, *The Masterpieces of the Centennial International Exhibition: Industrial Art* (Philadelphia: Gebbie & Barrie, 1878), pages 4–18. See also “Walter Smith: the Forgotten Man,” *Art Education*, January 1966, pages 3–9.

7. Eugene S. Ferguson (ed.), *Early Engineering Reminiscences (1815–40) of George Escol Sellers* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1965), page 40.

8. *Ibid.*, pages 38, 170.

9. *Ibid.*, page 42.

10. *The Atlantic Monthly*, volume 2, July 1858.

11. For facts on Louis Prang see Larry Freeman, *Louis Prang: Color Lithographer* (Watkins Glen, N. Y.: Century House, 1971) and Katharine M. McClinton, *The Chromolithographs of Louis Prang* (New York: Potter, 1973). See also Mary Margaret Sittig, “Louis Prang” (unpublished master’s thesis, George Washington University, 1970), and George Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card* (London: Spring Books, 1964).

12. Louis Prang, unpublished “Autobiography” (manuscript is in private hands); Arnold Dodel, *Instruction in Drawing* (Boston: The Prang Educational Co., 1890), pages 3–11.

13. Dodel, *Instruction*, pages 3–11.

14. D.A.B.

15. Mary Dana Hicks, *The Use of Models* (Boston: The Prang Educational Co., 1887), pages 3–31.

16. *Ibid.*

17. The Library of Congress has a complete set.

18. Dodel, *Instruction*, pages 12–35.

19. D.A.B. has a brief sketch.

20. G. E. Partridge, *Genetic Philosophy of Education* (New York: Sturgis & Walton, 1912), pages 7–380. See also G. Stanley Hall, *The New Movement in Education* (New York: University of the City of New York, 1891).

21. “Book Reviews,” *The Nation*, 7 February 1867.

### Chapter Nine: The Drawing Books in Perspective

1. D.A.B.

2. Lucy Abigail Brainard, *The Genealogy of the Brainerd-Brainard Family in America, 1649–1908* (Hartford: The Case, Lockwood and Brainard Co., 1908), pages 149–151.

3. Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit* (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1930), pages 75, 248.

4. William Morris Hunt, *Talks on Art* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1894), first series, pages 12, 70; second series, page 56.

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