

# COLOR



*By*

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*THE CAVE METHOD OF DRAWING,—FOR  
STUDENTS—SECOND PART.*

# C O L O R .

BY

MADAME MARIE ÉLISABETH CAVÉ,

MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS OF AMSTERDAM.

APPROVED BY M. EUGENE DELACROIX, FOR TEACHING  
PAINTING IN OILS AND WATER-COLORS.

To See, to Understand, to Remember, is to Know.—RUBENS.

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## REPORT OF M. DELACROIX.

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MR. MINISTER :—

The Commission nominated by Your Excellency to give its opinion upon the method of Madame Cave, and upon the question as to whether that method can be introduced into the schools, has the honor of presenting to Your Excellency the results of the examination that it has made.

The uncertain rate of progress in teaching drawing, the want of fixed principles that has prevailed in the instruction of it up to this day, even from remote ages, have long since rendered it desirable to have a method surer in its results, and capable of being applied by all teachers alike.

Anything like demonstration is impossible by the ordinary methods of instruction: the different ways in which the masters may regard the instruction and the art itself become the rule—a very variable one, as we can imagine—that governs the schools. Even admitting that these different roads can lead to an almost common result, that is to say, to a satisfactory knowledge of drawing, it is easy to see how important the functions of the master become, and how necessary it is that his special talents should qualify him for guiding the pupils in the midst of the uncertainty of the rules.

The first difficulty in such a method of instruction consists, then, in finding a sufficiently large number of teachers endowed with indispensable talents, and resigned to the exercise of functions that are, of course, poorly recompensed.

The second, and perhaps the most insurmountable difficulty, consists in the impossibility of procuring good models. Those that are met with in the schools, produced in all the successive styles, chosen hap-hazard, devoid of correctness or expression, can only vitiate the pupil's taste, and render the best guidance almost useless.

Your Excellency's predecessor, M. Fortoul, like all judicious minds, had been struck with such a deplorable deficiency. Aware of the novel results obtained by Madame Cave's method, he had nominated, to examine into the process, a Commission, the majority of which did not declare

themselves in favor of its adoption, but without approving the old method of instruction, the inconveniences of which had been almost unanimously recognized. The use of the tracing-copy, introduced by Madame Cave into her method, seemed especially to arouse the scruples of the Commission, and it was impossible for the greater part of its members to recognize in it anything more than the mechanical repetition of the models, almost wholly devoid of all intelligent and rational imitation.

Fresh successes of the Cave method have awakened the solicitude of Your Excellency. It seems to you, to-day, that in view of satisfactory and permanent results, the processes employed for obtaining them might not have been sufficiently understood. There is occasion, then, for reverting to so interesting a question, and, in order to give additional light to the Commission appointed for this purpose, it has been decided that the elements of the method should be presented to them and expounded by some person habituated to their use. M. d'Austrive, professor of drawing according to the Cave method, has been charged with this, and, thanks to the experience thus obtained, it has become easy to deliver an opinion upon the method with full knowledge of its advantages and its drawbacks.

The principal difference between the method and its predecessor consists in this: that it is first of all necessary to train the eye, by giving it some sure means of correcting its mistakes in the estimates of lengths and foreshortenings.

A transparent tracing-copy (*calque*) is put into the pupil's hands, so that by applying it from time to time to his drawing, he can himself recognize his faults and correct them. This incessant correction does not enable him to dispense with the attention that he must give to the original. After several attempts have shown him to what extent his eye has been capable of deceiving him, he redoubles his care to avoid mistakes that reveal themselves to him with a degree of evidence that could never be attained by the mere counsels of a master. His attention is furthermore kept up by the necessity in which he is placed of repeating from memory this first attempt thus corrected.

This second operation, in which the pupil seeks to recall the absent model, by drawing from memory his first attempt, has for its object to engrave still more deeply in his mind the relations of the lines to one another, and when, by a third operation, he has to copy the model again, this time

without the aid of the verifying trace copy, we feel that he must bring to this last task a more intelligent power of imitation.

It has been observed, in fact, in the attempts submitted to the inspection of the Commission, that this third draught ordinarily presented traces of a lively feeling, and one less restrained by the necessity of the precision to which the pupil had been forced in his drawing, executed by the aid of the verifying trace-copy.

The entire method consists in these three successive operations, which are applied equally to drawing from the relief and to the demarcation of shadows. The pupil thus acquires, and by very simple means, a very accurate appreciation of the laws of perspective in the human form, where we know that they are much more difficult, even impossible to realize in a mathematical manner by the means that the former methods have employed.

It seems unnecessary to enter into the details of the exercises that have for their final object to familiarize the pupil with handling the crayon, and obtaining lightness of hand, together with accuracy of eye. It will suffice to declare, in favor of this method, that not only can it be taught more practically than any other, but that it has a reliable starting-point, such as no other can offer.

It is in point to speak of the influence that the models are destined to exercise upon the progress of the pupils. These models are nothing more or less than the most beautiful specimens of the drawings of the great masters, or engravings from their pictures. With regard to those taken from antiques, they are drawn from the reliefs, by means of glass or transparent gauze, which offers, as objects of study, only figures traced with an exactitude of rigorous perspective.

The question relative to the choice of teachers is not less worthy of attention. The trace-copy, put into the hands of the pupil and designed to give him complete certainty as to the accuracy of his copy, renders the teacher's task infinitely more easy. Persons of second-rate talent, but merely familiar with the processes of the method, can become very good teachers. Even pupils can be substituted when they have reached a certain degree of facility in imitating the models.

We have seen this performed in the primary schools, where the method has been applied, and where the drawings have seemed very remarkable. The directors of these

schools had no knowledge of drawing. It is enough to say that the same would be the case in all the communes, where it would be almost impossible to have a teacher. We can therefore judge that the same principles, followed up in their development by experienced masters, would yield still more satisfactory results. Instruction in drawing, thanks to this new process, would gain in greater utility from an industrial point of view. It is known how many professions are based upon drawing. To extend the means of instruction in this direction is, then, to render a real service to the working classes. The models, which can be easily multiplied by all sorts of objects taken from nature, would augment the number of designs employed in ornamental work, in stuffs, in decorations of every kind, and would offer a variety and purity of form that would rescue industry and the arts from the triviality of conventional types, that tend to bring about their decay.

Such are the considerations resulting from the examinations of Madame Cave's method.

The Commission has judged the principles of it to be useful, and has the honor of recommending them to Your Excellency.

M. DELACROIX.

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*This report was approved and signed unanimously at the meeting held the second of December, 1861.*

By a decree dated February 19th, 1862, His Excellency, the Minister of Public Instruction, upon the report of the Commission, authorized the rectors of the academies of Douai and Caen to apply the Cave method in the normal schools of their jurisdiction.

M. Doudiet d'Austrive, professor of the Cave method, was charged with explaining and carrying out the method in the above-named schools.



# CAVE'S MANUAL OF COLOR.

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## FIRST LETTER.

### ANTIQUES — GREAT MASTERS.

YOU answered M. de C—— perfectly, my dear Julia, when you told him that it was intentional, my not recommending above all to my pupils the study of antiques, of Raphael and the great masters who have followed him.

I should take good care not to. Just as I do not make use of other persons' glasses, so I have instructed your daughters according to my own observations. If the result is good, why trouble yourself about the criticisms of the classical professors? Have they any scholars who can, like mine, after a year's study, draw from memory a Raphael, a Watteau, or any other master, beyond the possibility of being mistaken? Certainly not. Then I am right in making them acquainted with the masters before talking to them about them.

It is my principle not to begin at the end. The antiques, Raphael, Poussin, are the masters of style. To speak of style to a pupil who does not know how to draw, is to speak

of colors to a blind man. I do not wish your daughters to be like the children who are made to learn by heart the fables of La Fontaine, and who repeat like parrots those lessons of lofty philosophy. When the age of discretion arrives, they despise them because they have never understood them, and they persist in regarding them, after the manner of their ancestors, as nothing more than dolls, hobby-horses, and toy dogs to amuse their children.

It is with the antiques, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Poussin, as with Homer, Plato, Plutarch. One must be well on in one's studies in order to comprehend them.

I have not bored your daughters, then, with the great masters, as children are bored with our beautiful fables. First impressions are so seldom modified that it is prudent not to speak to pupils about great things until they are capable of appreciating them.

The arts and the sciences have their mysteries also, which may not be revealed to infancy; that would be exposing delicate eyes to a burning light.

But to-day I think that I am free to speak, and that I shall be understood.

In our drawing lessons, before placing your daughters in the presence of nature, I confronted them with the masters of all the schools, in order that they might see how these latter had interpreted nature while drawing it. To-day, in our lessons in coloring, before placing them in the presence of nature, I shall confront them with the colorists, in order that they may see how these latter have interpreted it with the brush. But I shall continue to be impartial: pupils are

not made by imposing one's own tastes and predilections upon them. I neither teach my manner of drawing nor my manner of painting. My pupils have all the great masters for their professors, since, by means of the tracing copy, the masters come of themselves and set to work, saying: "That is not right: begin over again, correct."

I might write to you that Watteau seems to me to be the master for women. But perhaps there is something in my organization which resembles his, and which makes me appreciate him more than another woman would. So I suffer the inclination, the feelings of your daughters to develop and guide themselves uninfluenced. I have opened for them a long road, very wide at the starting-point. At first there is room-for everybody; but, as one advances, it narrows and becomes difficult. Many rest by the way; very few reach the end. It is Elysium, Paradise: many called and few chosen.

But before reaching those summits where the choicest flowers sparkle, there are charming harvests to be gathered upon the lower slopes. How many wonders, from Teniers, who has painted the pleasures of Bacchus, down to Watteau, animating the woods and the gardens. See those parks and those meadows with their roaming pairs, so happy in their chatting and sporting that we catch ourselves enjoying them; enough to make us believe that they did nothing else under Louis XV. The trees belong so completely to the persons, and the persons to the trees, that we feel that they breathe the same air. An atmosphere of happiness is spread over all this nature, and, if Watteau has not wished to make poetry,

we must at least admit that he puts a great deal of it in the hearts and minds of those who contemplate his works.

He has painted the nature that was before his eyes. If the costume of the age of Louis XV. had had any character, he would be a painter of style, for it is impossible to be more faithful than he is; and style is natural movement.

The great masters prove this. Phidias has reproduced the beautiful forms and the grand figures that were before his eyes. What have Raphael and Poussin done? We see that they had the fixed intention of expressing well the great scenes that inspired them. They cling to them with a sort of piety, giving to each one of their personages his physiognomy, his attitude, and his action. For instance, they have both painted wood-sawers: what admirable faces! and how they are men of our day! the same correct and natural movement. The only difference is in the costume. And yet, if Raphael and Poussin had only painted wood-sawers, they would not have passed for masters of style. There are so many prejudices upon the matter of style.

Those who admire the great masters from the true point of view, admire all those who have adopted the same principle.

Placed before nature, your daughters perfectly appreciated everything without effort, without theoretical explanations, just as they knew perspective without knowing the how and the wherefore. They learned as children learn to talk, without grammar or dictionary. Is it not acknowledged that the best way of learning languages is to speak them from the first? I have adopted this principle.

Children, pupils, work on. You will soon know why.