

is, moreover, much easier for a beginner to manage than the complicated method of shading with the point. There is, it is true, an intelligent use of the point in drawing which proceeds naturally from the study of the construction of the figure; but it should be contracted in actual drawing from the figure, and the lines made in shading with the point should always be indicative of the construction. Any student who shows a disposition to work in this way with the point should be encouraged in the use of it; but for the majority the stump is by far the best means of learning to shade. As there is doubtless a certain amount of mechanical difficulty to be got over in its employment, it is here again that drawing models may be made use of in teaching the beginner how to make flat and evenly-graduated shades; care being taken that he does not spend more time over this than is necessary to facilitate his work for the future.

This first mechanical difficulty got over, the one main point the student has to attend to is the general tone or effect of the object he is working from, whatever it may be. And this he will find his great difficulty, not only as a beginner, but all through his course of study, and indeed through his life; it is so easy to see detail, and it is so difficult to subordinate it to the general tone. The student must constantly keep in mind his subject as a whole, while at the same time he does not omit to give all details their proper value. A prevailing fault with our students, and indeed with experienced painters, is that of making the reflections too strong, and therefore throwing the whole work out of tone. This fault arises among students from the desire to express distinctly everything that is seen; and in the process of doing this they forget the general balance of light and shade. With painters the desire is rather to give a spurious brilliancy to their pictures at the expense of truth. It is useless in making a study of a head, for instance, to have the proportions and features correct in outline, if in shading they are out of tone. A half-tint too dark, or a light too bright will destroy the unity of the work, and will cause it to present an assemblage of features, each in itself possibly right, but bearing no reference to the general roundness of the head.

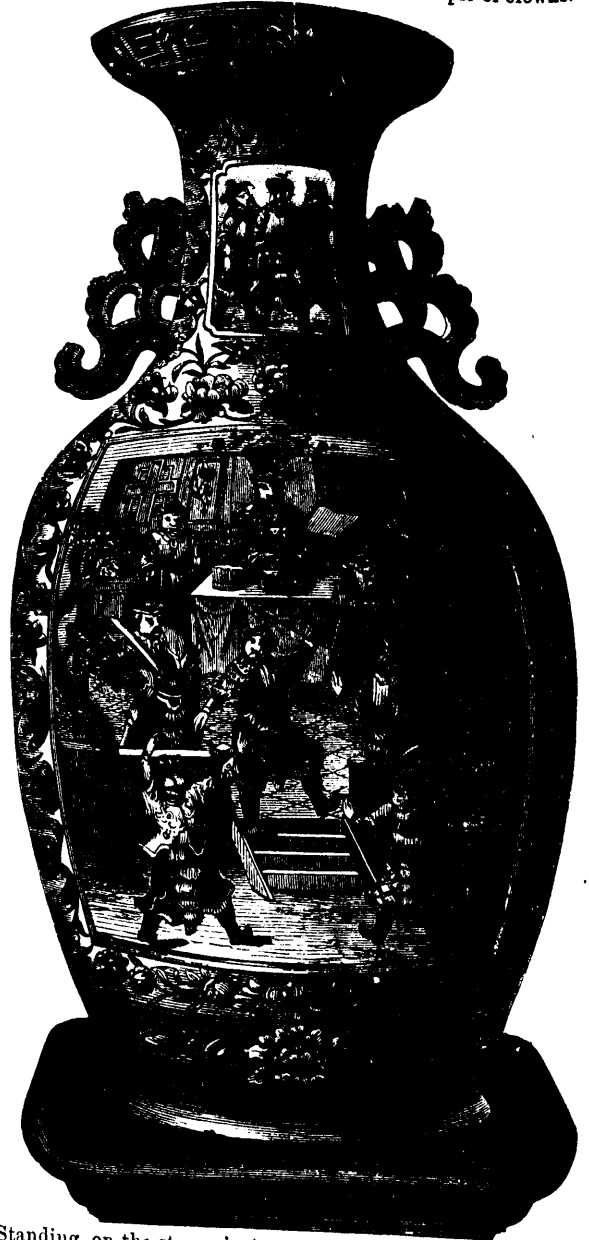
There is also in connection with this subject another point to which attention must be directed. It is not only by dwelling on detail that a student may err in not giving the proper tone to his figure; the whole key of the drawing may be too dark or too light. The former is generally the fault of students who are in earnest about their work; this arises from their looking too much at the shades with reference to each other, without due reference to the surroundings; that is to say, from their paying attention only to their *relative*, and not to what for convenience I may here call their *absolute*, strength in the scale of light and dark. It is very common, for instance, to see the darkest shadow in a drawing from a cast made absolutely, or very nearly, black. Now with reference to other shadows in the figure it may appear to be so—still more with reference to the lightest parts; but let the student look at anything really black (as, for instance, the shadow under the sleeve of a black coat), and he will then find the real value of the shade he is representing in the scale of tones in the room where he is working. This want of reference to the surroundings is the real cause of the blackness so frequently seen in drawings; by bringing the darkest shade to its proper value in the scale from black to white you will then have to lighten by degrees the whole of the rest of the shading to bring it into proportion, and the drawing will gradually acquire its proper tone.

The importance of the correct perception of tone has given rise in France to a system of drawing by tone merely, to the ignoring of constructive drawing; the result is that there is no school where tone (or, as they call it, "*les valeurs*") is better understood; the absurdities and cruelties of modern English art in this respect being unknown there. At present the French devote themselves too exclusively to this side of art, and the result is that in their seeking after its subtleties they have almost arrived at the conclusion that one object is as good to paint as another; a female head or a piece of raw meat being looked upon as equally suitable for the exercise of their skill in painting. There is no necessity for carrying matters to this extreme; the great Italian painters were none the less masters of tone because they devoted themselves to the study of form and to the higher points of construction and ideal beauty. But it must be kept in mind that no amount of anatomical or constructional knowledge of drawing is of value without a true perception of tone. A figure, which, as we say, is "all to pieces" in this respect, however correct the outline, will never stand the light of intelligent criticism. It is our want of perception on this point that makes foreigners laugh when they see our pictures, and with regard to most of our work of the most popular sort,

the laugh is fully* justified.—*American Architect and Building News.*

CHINESE PORCELAIN VASE.

The large porcelain vase shown on this page is of Chinese manufacture. The body, neck, and lips of the vase are covered for the most part with a fine vine and flower scroll pattern down in polychrome, but the front portion is occupied by medallions painted with figure subjects. What the subject of the upper design is, is uncertain, though it might very well represent a high official beset by rival office-seekers. But the lower picture tells its own story. Here is a grand Mogul seated at his ease, surrounded by his courtiers, watching the performance of a couple of clowns.



Standing on the steps, just outside of the Mogul's court, is the master of the clowns, urging the poor fellows on to renewed exertion.

* That there has been great improvement in English art in this respect within the last decade there can be no doubt. The particular garish look that was common to English exhibition-rooms is much modified of late; and the Paris Exhibition of last year (1878), compared to what they saw of it in 1867. I was gratified to hear from a French artist of distinction an opinion which is a confirmation of my own, that our art has improved and will continue to improve, because the English take what is good from other schools without sacrificing their originality. He compared it with the art of the Belgian, Italian, and other schools, which they can only imitate.