

“Splendid Mountain,” A Sketchbook by the Young John Singer Sargent

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“**S**PLENDID MOUNTAIN,” a sketchbook executed by John Singer Sargent at the age of fourteen while on a summer excursion with family members in 1870, contains watercolor, graphite, and black-crayon views of the Swiss Oberland. In addition to forty-seven studies drawn directly on the sketchbook pages, including three after Italian Renaissance artists, there are fourteen related landscape and portrait drawings done at this time, which Sargent or a relative is believed to have pasted into the book. This chronological pictorial diary begins on June 30, when Sargent, with his father, Dr. FitzWilliam Sargent, took a three-week walking tour from Kandersteg to Thun and then traveled north to Interlaken to join his mother and two sisters in Mürren, where they remained for about a month. The final leg of the tour extended from Grindelwald up to Mt. Pilatus and down to Lucerne, and finally back to their temporary home in Florence. It was at this time, on October 10, that Dr. Sargent wrote to the young boy’s grandmother Emily Haskell expressing discontent with their “nomadic sort of life,” and noting enthusiastically that “John seems to have a strong desire to be an artist . . . and we have concluded to gratify him and to keep that plan in view in his studies.”¹

In 1950 this sketchbook, as well as another one known as “Album 3,” which was also used by Sargent while in Switzerland in May and again in August, and a large group of paintings and drawings by the artist were given to the Metropolitan Museum by his younger sister, Mrs. Francis Ormond. The inscription “Splendid Mountain Watercolours” was written in Sargent’s hand on a paper label affixed to the cover of the sketchbook that is the sub-

ject of this study. As the drawings had had minimal exposure to light, the colors were in superb condition; however, the paper was damaged along the edges, the spine of the book was broken, and the pages were separated from the binding and randomly ordered. In 1988 conservation was begun and the sketchbook was reconstructed based on the dates and locations Sargent noted on many of the drawings, on correspondence, and on visual evidence found on pages adjacent to many of the drawings, such as extended strokes of watercolor, offsetting of graphite and crayon, pigment stains, and fragments of paper remaining from the torn signatures. The reassembled sketchbook indicates that Sargent executed the drawings in a sequence directly corresponding to the course of the tour.²

In addition to serving as a topographical record of the young artist’s holiday, this group of drawings may also be interpreted as reflecting certain aspects of the contemporary artistic and cultural climate, both in the timeliness and significance of its Alpine subject matter and in its materials and techniques. Examination of these pages further proves this to be a workbook in which Sargent explored problems in the representation of landscape and genre details and in the application of paint and color. The drawings merely hint at the brilliance of his mature style. They lack the coloristic bravura, compositional interest, and atmospheric qualities he would develop with studio training and years of practice, yet even as an untutored artist, the seeds of Sargent’s virtuosity are evident.

Collectively, these sheets reveal Sargent’s awareness of current watercolor practices. There is, however, no documentation indicating where or how he might have learned of these techniques and theories, and what his sources of inspiration might have been at this formative stage of his artistic career.

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The notes for this article begin on page 204.

Until the winter of 1869–70, when the thirteen-year-old Sargent first attended school, he had been educated almost exclusively by his father. His formal art instruction began only after the summer's Swiss holiday. Presumably he received some early guidance in drawing from his mother, Mary Sargent, who was an amateur of modest talent, but it is unlikely that she served as his teacher for long. Comparison of his work with her drawings reveals that by age fourteen he had easily surpassed her unaffected manner.³ Surviving correspondence indicates that Sargent's enlightened, expatriate family, who were in constant travel through much of Europe, were inveterate sightseers and art enthusiasts.⁴ Certainly they would have been aware of the enormous popularity of watercolor painting at this time and sensitive to the current cultural milieu. Perhaps during their stay in London in the spring of 1870, only a few months before this trip, they had visited the acclaimed yearly exhibitions of the Royal Academy and the Society of Painters in Watercolours, which had included works in this medium by Turner, the Pre-Raphaelites, and many other contemporary practitioners.⁵

Customary on the Sargents' annual itinerary was Switzerland, where they often spent their summers. The widespread fascination at this time with Alpine scenery—the primary subject matter of this sketchbook—would not have escaped their cognizance. Ever since the mid-eighteenth century the Swiss tour had been pro forma with nobility, literary and artistic figures, and the educated middle class, which included Sargent's family. Not only had a stream of notable figures, among them Goethe and Turner, traversed its passes, bringing back printed, painted, and written images of the Alps, but for those remaining at home, parlor games, panoramas, and architecture in the Swiss style reflected the wide popularity of Alpine touring. In the fifteen years prior to the Sargent family sojourn, this enthusiasm had accelerated with the scaling of the Wetterhorn in 1854, the Matterhorn in 1865, and the formation of the English and Continental Alpine clubs.

The focus on Switzerland, as on other scenic locales, including the Hudson River and the Rhine, was a manifestation of the widely held nineteenth-century Romantic philosophy Transcendentalism, a belief in the communion between man and nature and in the divine forces with which nature was imbued. In the vanguard of this response to nature were poets and landscape artists, and, significantly, it was during this time that plein-air painting be-

came popular. Watercolor, because of its diverse technical range and inherent transparency, was particularly suitable for portraying evocative features of the topography: heavy mists, changing skies, clouds pierced by rays of sunlight. Professionals and amateurs were drawn to this medium because it was versatile—allowing a wide range of descriptive effects and rapid execution—less costly, and more portable than oils.

To meet the needs of the plein-air artist and the watercolor practitioners of this era, a new trade arose, that of artists' colorman (including the establishment of the London firms of Newman, Reeve, Rowney, and Winsor and Newton). The many products introduced to the market expanded the variety of techniques the artist, amateur or professional, could employ. Notable among them was the compact enameled-tin sketching box with its lid doubling as a palette, which was more easily carried into the field than the cumbersome, wooden studio apparatus traditionally used by the watercolorist. Filling these boxes were the new machine-ground moist colors (introduced ca. 1841) packed in porcelain pans and in new compressible metal tubes (introduced 1846), which allowed relatively dry color with appreciable body to be applied at full saturation or in readily produced washes. Stimulating new techniques were Permanent and Chinese whites (1831, 1834), opaque pigments made of zinc oxide that did not blacken as had lead white, and additives like oxgall and megilp to enhance wetting power and viscosity without altering transparency. Other materials made for the watercolorist included sketching boards and frames, prestretched paper in solid drawing blocks, and papers in various textures, colors, and surface finishes suited to an array of practices, such as sponging and blotting. New accessories included India rubber for lifting color, assorted scrapers and erasers, a myriad of flat, round, and pointed brushes of sable or camel hair, japanned water vessels, collapsible easels and camp stools (see Figures 28, 29), umbrellas, staffs, and, not least, scores of instruction books published by artists and colormen directed to the amateur watercolorist in which the theory and techniques of this medium were carefully systematized.

The young Sargent was undoubtedly equipped with many of these supplies for his summer's venture into plein-air painting. There is no concrete evidence, however, that any art instruction manuals were taken along or had been previously consulted. It is nonetheless plausible that the elder Sargents

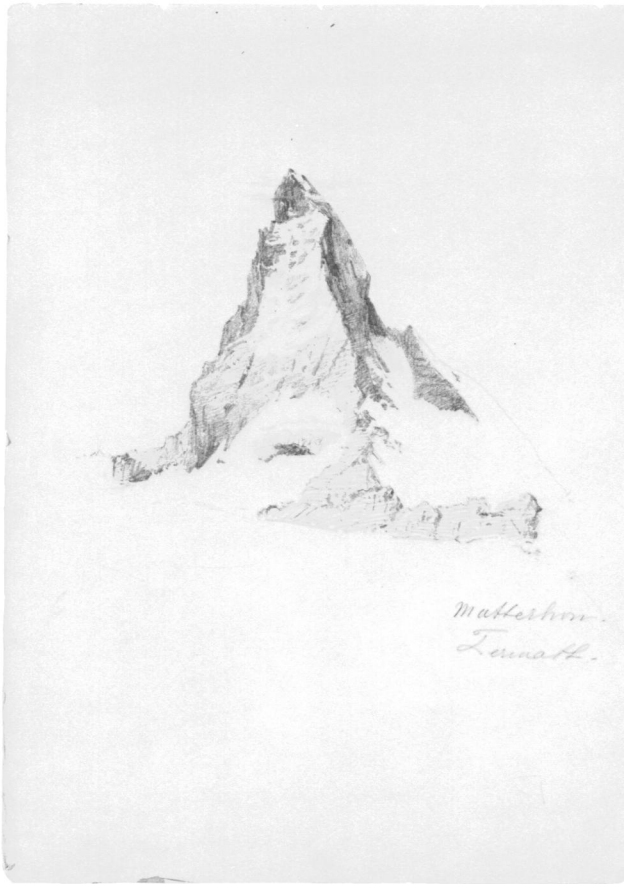


Figure 1. John Singer Sargent (American, 1856–1925), *Matterhorn, Zermatt* (50.130.1460) from *Splendid Mountain* notebook, 1870. Graphite on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Francis Ormond, 1950 (50.130.146). Unless otherwise credited, all illustrations in this article are from the notebook.

were familiar with some of the numerous American and British drawing books published in the nineteenth century—a period of time in which art instruction was closely allied with education. Books appearing before 1860 emphasized the utilitarian function of art, commonly establishing parallels between drawing, reading, and penmanship and presenting art in formulas intended as a means of teaching practical skills. These manuals stressed figure drawing and fixed concepts of beauty, based on “ideal types.” Between 1820 and 1860, 145 of them had been published in America, and from 1800 to 1860, 217 had been published in Britain.⁶ Toward the late 1850s the emphasis in art instruction shifted to aesthetics, owing to the influence of the most widely read manual of the era, John Ruskin’s *Elements of Drawing in Three Lessons for Beginners*. First published in 1857, and appearing in multiple editions and reprints for decades thereafter, the book sold thousands upon thousands of copies.⁷ Recommended by the author for a youth or girl not less than age twelve or fourteen,⁸ its impact on art education was pervasive in England and America throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. It would have been unlikely for a young artist to have escaped its influence. In addition to presenting his philosophy of art appreciation, Ruskin advocated a new means of using watercolor that soon became familiar in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites.



Figure 2. *Matterhorn* (50.130.146n). Graphite.

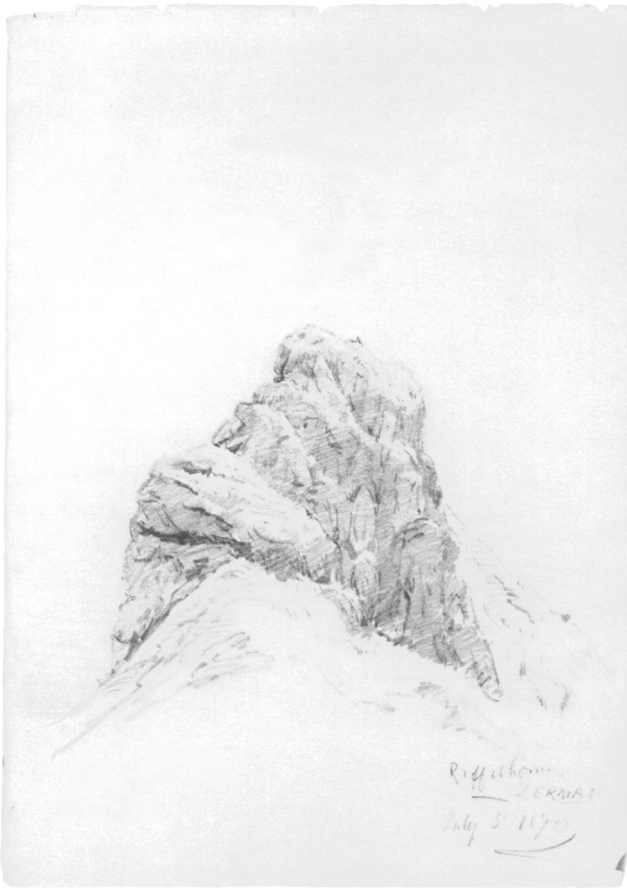


Figure 3. *Riffelhorn from Zmutt Glacier, July 5* (50.130.146q). Graphite

An examination of Sargent's subject matter, his transcription of landscape, his portrayal of individual motifs, his method of working, and his use of opaque paint made with Chinese white suggests that the precepts Ruskin had made commonplace may have served as an aesthetic guide for him at this time. Other aspects of these drawings—namely Sargent's brushwork, his experiments in broad transparent washes, and his use of subtractive methods—suggest, however, that the young artist also turned to bolder, pure-colored wet-wash practices as a model. A traditional method of watercolor painting, this technique experienced a resurgence in popularity at the end of the 1860s as artists began to react against the polished and controlled Victorian composition. Although it is not possible to identify a mentor or a specific manual Sargent might have consulted for transparent painting, the technique was employed by many professional artists, and was described in an array of books for the amateur, including George Barnard's *The Theory and Practice of Landscape Painting in Water-Colours* (Lon-

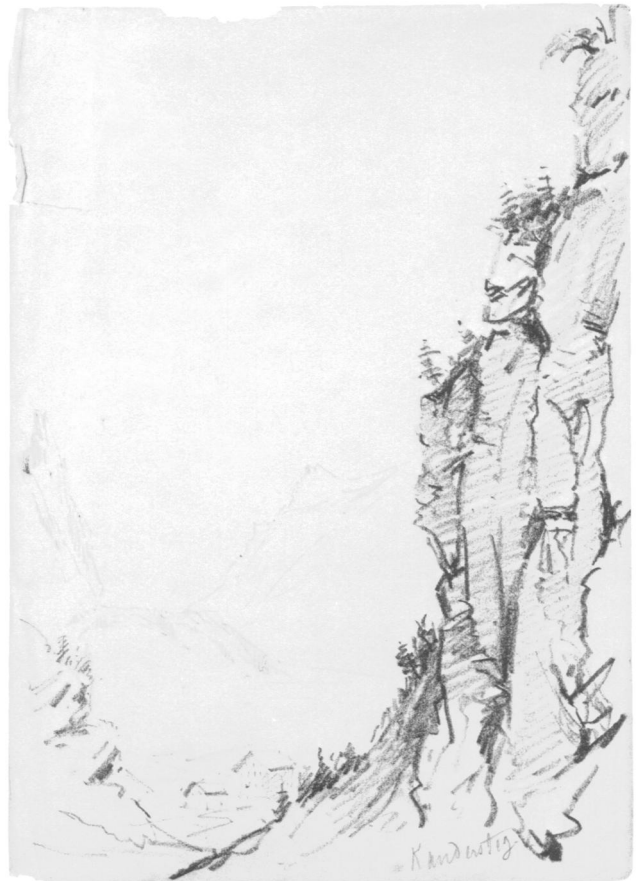


Figure 4. *Kandersteg, June 30* (50.130.146d). Graphite

don, 1861). Regarded at the time as being in marked opposition to each other, these two modes of watercolor painting, which Sargent first explored during his 1869 Alpine tour, were to form the core of the technical vocabulary he would use throughout his life.

Whereas earlier theories of art education had been largely guided by the aesthetic system of Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses* (1760–90), with its preconceived notions of beauty and traditional hierarchy of genres,⁹ or were inspired by the concepts of William Gilpin on the idealization of nature,¹⁰ Ruskin questioned these assumptions. His objective was not to instruct in a particular method or to improve upon nature, but to encourage close observation of the woods and the hills as a means of learning to draw and as a means of appreciating art.¹¹ While acknowledging that direct imitation of nature was more or less impossible, Ruskin advocated strict fidelity in depicting exactly what one observed.¹² He denounced the composed landscape, with its pastoral conventions and imaginary archi-



Figure 5. *Monte Rosa from Gorner Grat, July 3* (50.130.146p). Graphite

ecture, as “false to nature,”¹³ and he insisted on the humble and the commonplace, especially as exemplified by the “peace and rusticity” of his much-beloved Swiss Alps.¹⁴ Whereas earlier nineteenth-century manuals instructed that everything “accidental” be eliminated from the landscape composition and encouraged the student to select a point of view that would exclude objectionable forms,¹⁵ Ruskin argued for their inclusion. He admonished the “solitary student,” to whom he addressed his lessons, to choose the rough, the worn, the clumsy: “Everything that you think very ugly will be good for you to draw.”¹⁶ His belief that Nature was the master was succinctly expressed in the conclusion to his widely read *Modern Painters*: “From young artists nothing ought to be tolerated but bona fide imitation of nature . . . rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing.”¹⁷

It is this approach to nature that Sargent seems to communicate in these drawings. They are accurate transcriptions of the scenery. Each drawing represents a given vista and its architectural features, but

Sargent has not edited or idealized them. Rather, he has identified many of the locales, such as mountain peaks and glaciers, and the sites from which the views were drawn. While there is an absence of precisely recorded botanical and geological detail—a trait characteristic of Sargent throughout his oeuvre—most of the sheets reveal careful attention to representing the broader features of the topography, capturing the form and color of the mountains, the expanses of snow, the waterfalls and boulders, the weight and shadows of the clouds. Reflecting Ruskin’s injunction, Sargent aimed “neither at details, as does the mechanic, nor at generalities, as does the trickster.”¹⁸

Of the forty-seven studies in the sketchbook, six were done in black crayon and thirteen in graphite. Although drawn throughout the summer, most of the works in direct-line media are concentrated in the earlier days of the tour. Because of the distinctive properties of these two media, the drawings have different visual characteristics. Those done in hard graphite, which is unyielding to blending or softening of the stroke, reveal an emphasis on precision and sharp contrasts,¹⁹ as seen, for example, in *Matterhorn, Zermatt* (Figures 1, 2), *Riffelhorn from Zmutt Glacier, Zermatt, July 5* (Figure 3) and an unidentified mountain sketch (50.130.146y). The black-crayon views and two of the graphite drawings, on the other hand, are more forceful and assured and presage the bold handling that will characterize Sargent’s mature work. This is especially apparent in the lively lines depicting the rocky precipices and windswept trees of *Kandersteg, June 30* (Figure 4), and *Gemmi Pass, July 1* (50.130.146v), or the surge of the rushing water in the small *Mountain Waterfall* of late July (Figure 6), all in crayon, and in *Monte Rosa from the Gorner Grat, July 3* (Figure 5), and the equally expressive *Jungfrau from Above Mürren* (50.130.146bb). The last two were executed in a soft pencil with broad, sweeping strokes. Sargent appears to have used this sketchbook in the manner prescribed by Ruskin, not as generally employed by a young novice for labored repetitions of a motif, as he had done in an 1867 monochromatic watercolor exercise, in which he repeated one motif—a cluster of leaves—throughout the sheet (Figure 27). Instead he has made quick notes when sites along the route presented “passing opportunities,”²⁰ such as wind-tossed foliage, dramatic shadows, changing skies, or rushing water. This approach to subject matter was encouraged by Ruskin, for by observing and drawing the lines of action, or

“governing lines,” which give forms their character,²¹ the beginner would in time be able to attain accuracy and speed. This was an essential concept of Ruskin’s pedagogy: deliberate, methodical habits gained by practice were crucial for capturing the fleeting effects of nature and would eliminate reliance on invention.²²

Sargent’s crayon drawings, which are arguably the most artistically mature of the entire sketchbook, in particular evoke Ruskin’s ideas on integrating shapes and shadows, “relieving one mass, or one tint against another, but outlining none.”²³ The latter part of the statement refers to a traditional method of applying neutral tints within carefully defined spaces, generally circumscribed by ink lines. In Sargent’s drawings there is a sense of quick execution, as if he had dashed them off without effort and without relying on erasures or laborious corrections. There is no emphasis here on hard outlines; instead, forms are developed, defined, and given volume by the rapid repetition and reworking of the line; shadows are built simply by hatching with the broad side of the crayon. It is this style of draftsmanship that Sargent would continue to employ in the years ahead. These works convey a sense of atmosphere and perspective by the division of the composition, as in *Kandersteg* (Figure 4), into three zones receding into depth and by a decrease in pressure of the crayon from the bold, dark lines of the foreground to faintly visible strokes in the distant vista. Wax crayon was never highly favored among professional artists and, indeed, was never even mentioned in drawing manuals, which advised that the student use pen and ink, or pencil, because of their greater precision. Nevertheless, wax crayon was readily available in the second part of the nineteenth century,²⁴ its use undoubtedly encouraged by the prevalence of the lithographic crayon, and by its suitability for the now-popular smooth-textured wove paper, like these pages of Sargent’s notebook. Sargent rarely, if ever, returned to this medium in his later work.

Other drawings in direct-line media are on the final pages of the “Splendid Mountain” sketchbook, which were filled when the Sargent family arrived in Florence after their Swiss tour. These include the study of a putto inscribed “Guercino,” the only charcoal sketch in the book, and two labored pencil drawings after Michelangelo’s *Dawn* and *Night* from the Medici tomb.²⁵ Comparison of these studies and Sargent’s watercolor portraits of Swiss children and farmers, such as *Frau von Allmen and a Companion in*

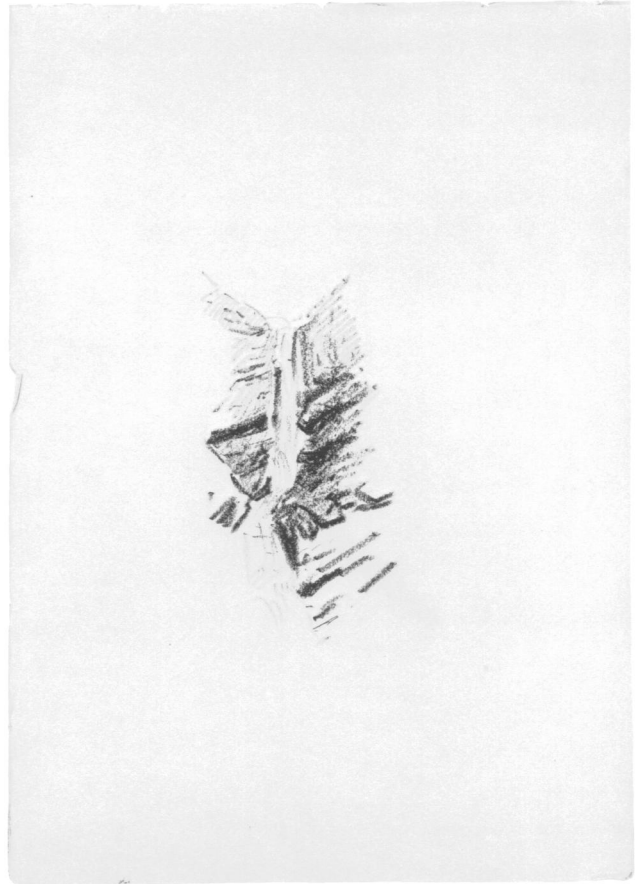


Figure 6. *Mountain Waterfall* (50.130.146s). Graphite

an Interior (Figure 26), with the landscapes in the sketchbook testifies to the difficulties the representation of the human figure presented to Sargent at this time. It is noteworthy that Ruskin commented on the limitations of the beginner in drawing the figure. Maintaining that this subject matter was beyond his capabilities but despairing of the codified expressions and rigid formulas taught by his predecessors, Ruskin instead encouraged the novice to attend to landscape, but to use the sketchbook to copy old masters, as Sargent has done here. Copying old masters, whether casts or paintings, was the traditional prelude to learning to work on one’s own. To Ruskin, however, its purpose was to “inspire one to aim at higher perfection when drawing from nature.”²⁶

It is most notably in drawings of the same subject done in a sequence of different mediums that one can grasp a sense of Sargent’s working procedure. In the preliminary graphite or crayon drawing of each group he focused on the masses and shadows

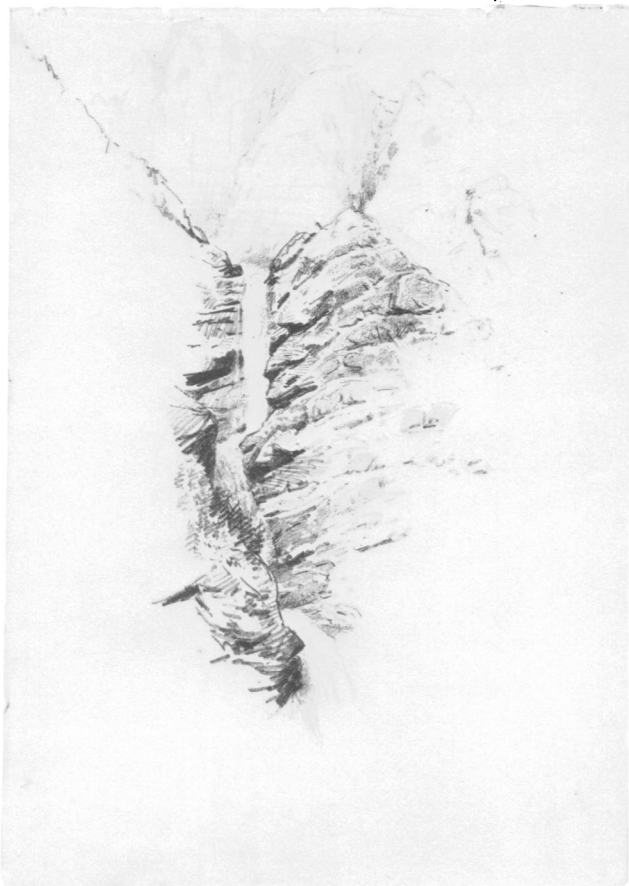


Figure 7. *Waterfall* (50.130.146r). Graphite



Figure 8. *Handek Falls* (50.130.146x). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing

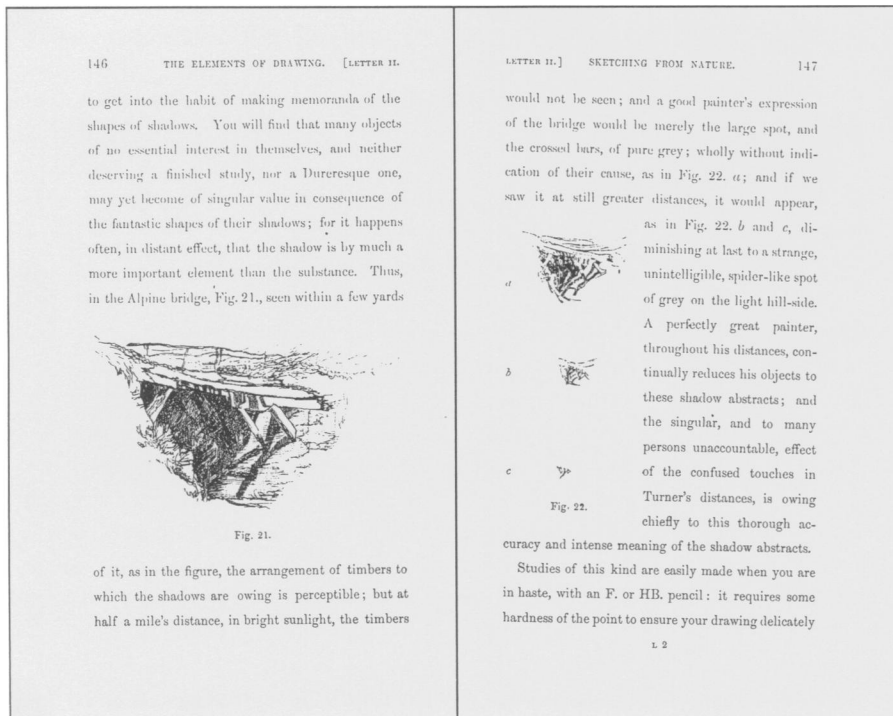


Figure 9. John Ruskin (English, 1819–1900), pages 146–147 from *Elements of Drawing* (London, 1857)

and on the characteristic lines of the forms—an approach to drawing that recalls Ruskin’s lessons. The black-and-white gradations of these works served as a rough guide for the tonal values in the subsequent watercolor studies, whereas the rapidly executed preliminary pencil notations established the overall structure. This summary foundation was not meant to be developed into a drawing in its own right, but served as a guideline for the overlapping opaque and transparent washes, a technique seen in Sargent’s watercolors throughout his oeuvre.²⁷ In the four drawings of the Matterhorn, the first (Figure 2) is a precise, yet simple contour sketch in pencil; the second (Figure 1), also in this medium, studies the shadows, rock masses, glaciers, and clouds; and the last two are in watercolor, revealing an increased economy in the pencil work beneath complex layers of color (Figure 10; *Matterhorn and Gorner Glacier, Zermatt*, Fogg 1937.2). In another group of four drawings depicting a waterfall (Figures 6–8, 17) Sargent captures the force and configuration of the rushing water. Here, as in the other groups, he explored the development of a motif in terms of light and shadow and its appearance from varying distances. The first in the series (Figure 6) is a small and economically rendered study in crayon of the waterfall seen from afar; the second (Figure 7), also unidentified (both early July), is a larger, highly finished close-up view in graphite; the third (Figure 7) is a bold, full-sheet watercolor with rapid and minimal underdrawing of Handek Falls (late July) traversed by a small wooden bridge. In each the waterfall is isolated from the larger landscape context. The last sheet, *View of the Eiger from Mürren, Aug. 3* (Figure 17), depicts the waterfall as a few vertical scratches in the paint layer. These drawings have a curious parallel in an exercise illustrated by Ruskin (Figure 9), in which he uses an Alpine bridge crossing a ravine to describe the gradual generalization and abstraction of form to shadow as it is perceived from increasing distances, becoming less and less intelligible.²⁸ Although Sargent’s group of waterfall studies appears not to have been executed in a sequence of progressively smaller forms, his focus on a particular motif, represented at different distances and diminished in the last composition to a barely recognizable entity, is evocative of Ruskin’s belief that “a perfectly great painter continually reduces his objects throughout his distances to these shadow abstracts.”²⁹ Similar treatment of subject matter—capturing the characteristic lines and masses of the forms in graphite or crayon



Figure 10. *Matterhorn from Zmutt Glacier* (50.130.146kk). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing

and then developing it in watercolor, is observed throughout the sketchbook—for example, in the various studies of the Jungfrau ([graphite] 50.130.146bb and [watercolor] 50.130.146c), Beis Glacier ([crayon] 50.130.146n, and Figure 12 [watercolor]), Monte Rosa (Figures 5 [graphite], 11 [watercolor]), and the Eiger ([graphite] 50.130.141z and Figure 17 [watercolor]).

One of the underpinnings of Ruskin’s teaching was to observe all the details of nature, drawing them exactly as they are without relying on recipes or invention. Although this was to have a profound impact on art instruction in the late nineteenth century, evidence in the sketchbook suggests that any insistence on detail would not have attracted Sargent’s interest. Here, as throughout his oeuvre, Sargent paid little attention to recording the intricacies of the surrounding world, his emphasis placed instead on the overall composition. However, in viewing the sketchbook drawings as a group, one sees how Sargent repeatedly reworked and refined the components of the landscape—not as isolated ele-

ments, but within their natural setting—continually observing and recording the shapes or transformations of such details as clouds, rocks, and sky. In the context of current teaching practices, this disciplined approach and avoidance of formulas is evocative of the principles Ruskin sought to convey when he encouraged young artists to use mock-ups, or artificial devices, to perfect their skill in capturing the fleeting effects of nature.³⁰ He suggested, for example, floating leaves or walnut shells in a basin of water tinted with Prussian blue to help master reflections and ripples on a lake or stream and lumps of cotton in order to imitate the softness and shadows of clouds.³¹ The study of clouds, like that of weather and atmosphere, stemmed from a long tradition in European and American art and criticism. Not only had many poets and artists been intrigued by the sky as symbolic of the alliance between art, philosophy, and nature, but there was also widespread scientific interest in meteorological phenomena throughout the nineteenth century.³²

Although there is no reason to assume that Sargent utilized the time-honored method of three-dimensional models, an examination of his depiction of clouds reveals how he similarly sought new solutions to the difficult problems of movement and change they presented. In *Beis Glacier and Weisshorn* (Figure 12) the cloud is a pool of dark and light gray washes heavily perched on the mountain peak. In *Veisch Glacier, Eggischhorn, July 10* (Figure 13) the



Figure 12. *Beis Glacier and Weisshorn* (50.130.146nn). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing



Figure 11. *Monte Rosa from Hörnli, Zermatt* (50.130.146i). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing

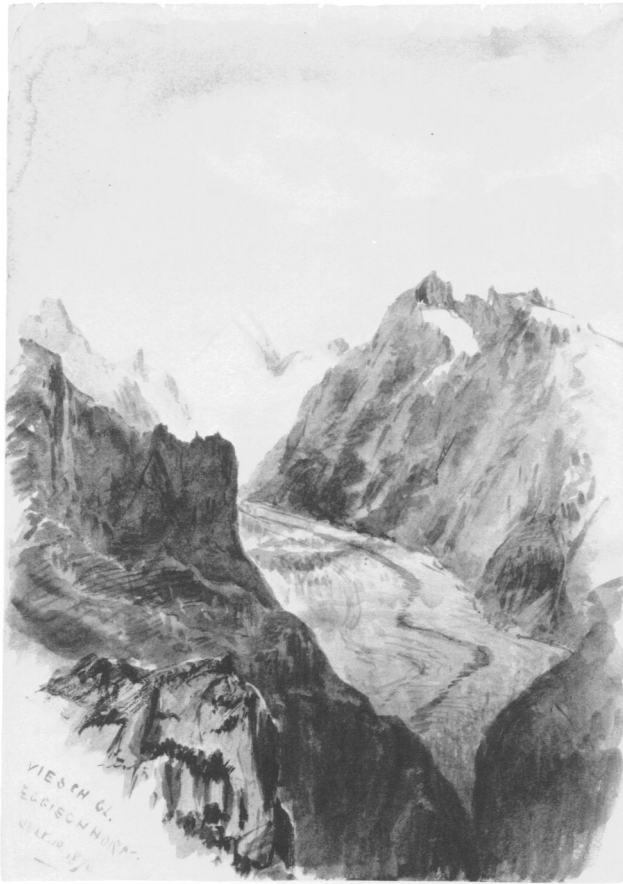


Figure 13. *Viesch Glacier, Eggischhorn, July 10* (50.130.146ii). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing

cloud is only implied by the void left in the blue sky. In *Rhone Glacier, July 13* (Figure 14) the realistic, billowing cloud masses are produced by shading the white paper reserve with gray washes. Not so convincing are the indefinite shapes of misty, filmy cirrus clouds in the *Mürren* (Figure 17) and *Gspaltenhorn* studies (Figure 18). Examination of the brushwork in these watercolors, as in the other sheets in the sketchbook, which ranges from dry and tight to very fluid handling, reveals Sargent's efforts over the course of the summer to master the depiction of cloud forms and to convey a sense of atmospheric transparency. On the other hand, representations of water, as in *Lake of the Dead, Grimsel, July 14* (50.130.146g) or *View of the Four Mountains* (Figure 15), are handled in a conventional and awkward manner; a formula of dark horizontal strokes over a tinted wash betrays Sargent's inexperience. Although he gained mastery in portraying clouds, his difficulties in depicting the surface movement of water and reflections were not resolved during this summer's drawing excursion.

It is interesting to note that, apart from the three waterfall studies, the only drawing in Sargent's sketchbook of an independent landscape element is a modest watercolor rendering of a rock (Figure 15), a motif that appears repeatedly throughout these scenes. This was an especially favorite subject of Ruskin's, who devoted a drawing exercise to it (Exercise VIII) in the first letter of his widely ac-



Figure 14. *Rhone Glacier, July 13* (50.130.146h). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing



Figure 15. *View of the Four Mountains; Rock Study* (50.130.146ee). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing

claimed book *Elements of Drawing*, and an illustration, which he encouraged his reader to use as a model (Figure 16).³³ According to Ruskin, who praised the specificity of the botanical and geological subjects portrayed by the Pre-Raphaelites, for whom rock studies were frequent subjects, the representation of details was a means of understanding the larger landscape in microcosm. In particular, Ruskin believed that the close examination of rocks could enlighten one's understanding of the general. If one could draw a stone, Ruskin maintained, one could draw anything.³⁴ To him rock study was the basis of representing roundness in nature and mastering color and value gradation: "When once you have mastered the complexity of a stone, the forms of distant hills will be comparatively easy."³⁵ It cannot be known if this philosophy had any impact on the young Sargent when he painted this gray boulder, which is gently illuminated and covered with variegated patches of green and purple lichen. Nonetheless, his choice of motif, its isolation from the landscape and his sharp focus on details suggest his awareness of artistic trends associated with Ruskin.

Whereas Sargent's representation of the Alpine landscape appears to evoke the teachings of John Ruskin, his handling of materials draws upon diverse practices. The controlled definition of Sargent's brushwork and the opacity of his paint in most of the sheets indicate that the technique the

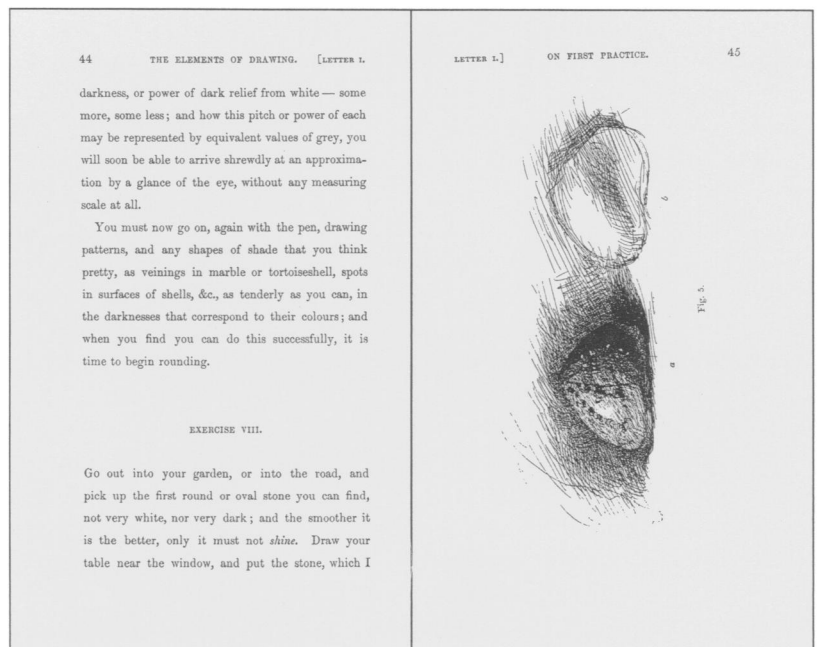


Figure 16. John Ruskin, Exercise viii, pages 44, 45 from *Elements of Drawing* (London, 1857)



Figure 17. *View of the Eiger from Mürren, Aug. 3* (50.130.14600). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing

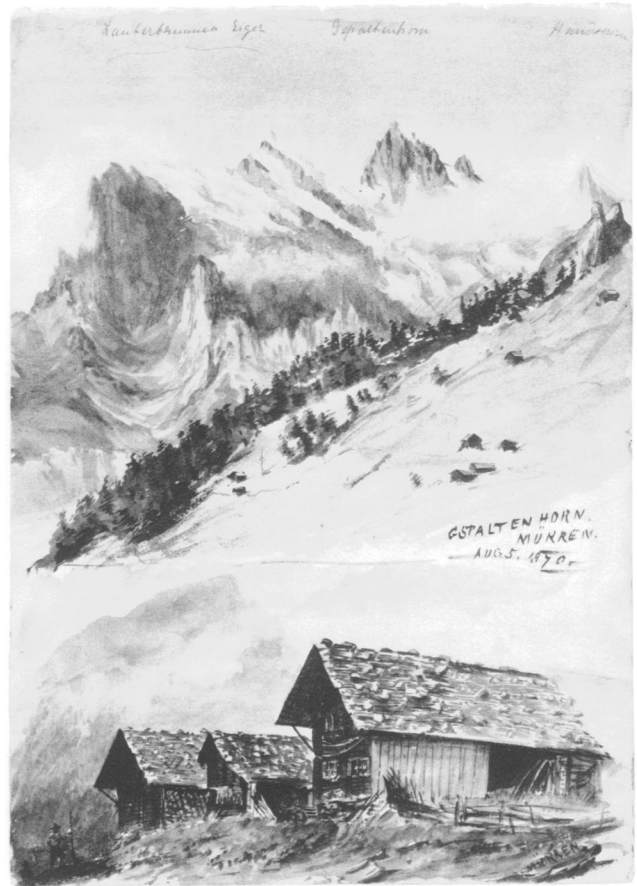


Figure 18. *Gspaltenhorn, Mürren, Aug. 5* (50.130.1462). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing

young artist was most at ease with was body color painting. This method of watercolor work had enjoyed great popularity since the 1850s, owing to the influence of Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites. An easy mode of painting for the beginner, body color painting entailed the use of opaque and semi-opaque colors applied in layers, patches, and stipples. The paint itself was composed of watercolor and Chinese white, a mixture that would render the colors pale and opaque and give them substance or body.³⁶ Very little water was used in this process, which allowed great precision in the stroke. In the manner of oil painting, dark colors could be applied first, followed by lighter ones and then by the highlights. Corrections could be made without difficulty by painting over a previous applied color. The pure watercolor method, on the other hand, entailed layering transparent or tinted washes on dampened white paper. This paint was also composed of watercolor but with a plentiful amount of water, yielding diluted and flowing colors that were valued as a

means of enhancing atmospheric effects. In this technique, the brightness of the paper was reflected through the glazes: one started with the light colors and made the work darker by adding additional layers of color, thereby obscuring the source of light below. Highlights were achieved by scraping through the paint layer or blotting up color to reveal the white paper. Corrections were made by removing and reapplying color.

Both techniques had been practiced since the eighteenth century. Although the principle of each method was to modify the color of the separate landscape elements,³⁷ and artists often combined aspects of each technique in their work, controversy was long-standing as to which was the better mode of painting.³⁸ Responding to one of the most important concerns of the watercolorist—capturing the changing effects of atmospheric events, which were so effectively managed with limpid washes—Ruskin had warned his readers that “glows and glooms were not the noblest aim of art.”³⁹ Although he

begrudgingly acknowledged that the two methods could be used in combination, he believed the matte texture of opaque paint was more like nature than transparent color.⁴⁰ By applying it in small strokes and hatches, he maintained, one would be “prevented from falling into the pestilent habit of sponging to get texture, a trick that had nearly ruined our modern watercolor school.”⁴¹ Reacting to the precisionist vision of the Ruskinian method and inspired by the freer handling of Turner, the wash technique came back into fashion in the late 1860s. Proponents of this method, such as George Barnard, praised the richness and jewellike quality of pure watercolor and its ability to convey depth and atmosphere. Barnard believed that body color had a “mealy dustiness” to it and was not true to nature; also, its use required that the work be viewed from a distance in order that one gain a sense of atmosphere.⁴² These aesthetic judgments notwithstanding, the wet method entailed vast experience, for the painter never knew exactly how his work would look until it dried. Hence, it was generally conceded that the body color technique, which allowed greater control of the paint flow, was a less difficult means of laying in graduated tones, and thus more suitable for the unpracticed hand.⁴³

Throughout the summer of 1869 the young John Singer Sargent experimented with the possibilities offered by each of these techniques and with the two types of paper he took with him on the summer’s tour. Most of the drawings done on the thick, textured papers known as Not⁴⁴ from his sketching blocks were done entirely in transparent washes. Those on the thinner, smooth-surfaced paper of the sketchbook are in a mixed technique, a practice Sargent would continue to employ in the years ahead. In most of the drawings, features of the terrain, such as rocks, boulders, glacial passes, and architectural elements, are painted primarily in body color and on dry paper. Some of these colors are opaque because they were made with Chinese white, while others are in dense, semitransparent pigments, including cobalt blue, vermilion, and Indian red. Because these paints were used with small amounts of water, the strokes and forms tend to be well defined, as in *Matterhorn from Zmutt Glacier*, and *Rhone Glacier, July 13* (Figures 10, 14). Sargent’s process of painting generally entailed first applying broad layers of color in opaque or semitransparent washes to a dry sheet of paper. Over this, using a smaller flat-ended brush, he added rough daubs and interlaced strokes of paint of the same consistency as the un-

derlayer in a range of earth tones to suggest such details as the rock, crevices, and cliffs.

This manner of breaking up forms into component colors and allowing parts of the underlayer, or areas of blank paper, to remain visible—which Sargent repeatedly practiced, rather than relying on either seamless passages with sharply defined contours or amorphous washes—evokes Ruskin’s concept of using “atoms of color in juxtaposition,” in order to represent the color gradations found in nature.⁴⁵ This is seen, for example, in the foreground of *Schreckhorn, Eismeer* (Figure 21), in which a multiplicity of opaque strokes with distinct edges were set down while the paint was dry. Sargent also experimented with another technique in this sheet. At the lower right, thinner patches of green and red were applied while the browns and ochers beneath were still damp, causing the colors to bleed into each other. Used with restraint here, this “wet on wet” method, with its characteristic blurred edges, was to become a mainstay of Sargent’s technical repertory. By trial and error, or through the study of exhibited watercolors, a young artist with great innate ability could have intuitively developed the techniques of daubing, interlacing, layering, and combining wet and dry colors. Yet they were also the means described by Ruskin, and later adopted by proponents of transparent painting, for producing tonal gradations to represent shadows, highlights, depth, and reflections.⁴⁶ Another equally bold technique employed by Sargent is seen in *Eismeer, Grindelwald* (Figure 22), where he suggests the jagged ravine edge by charging his brush with opaque color and quickly dragging it at an angle across the dry, transparent paint, yielding an expressive broken line.⁴⁷

In the representation of architectural details, Sargent similarly attempted to break up color, but the results were not as effective. This was due in part to the awkwardness of his drawing of the chalets and their perspective, but also to the difficulties he encountered in producing subtle variations in the dense umber and black with which he portrayed these wooden buildings. In order to enliven these surfaces, Sargent relied on incising through the paint layer with a knife to expose the white paper, as in *View of the Eiger from Mürren, Aug. 3* (Figure 17). A few days later in the Gspaltenhorn (Figure 18) and Breithorn drawings (50.130.146aa), both dated August 5, he tried another approach. Here the chalets are still awkwardly drawn, but the color is laid on in flowing, transparent washes of green, red, and brown, and without recourse to scraping.

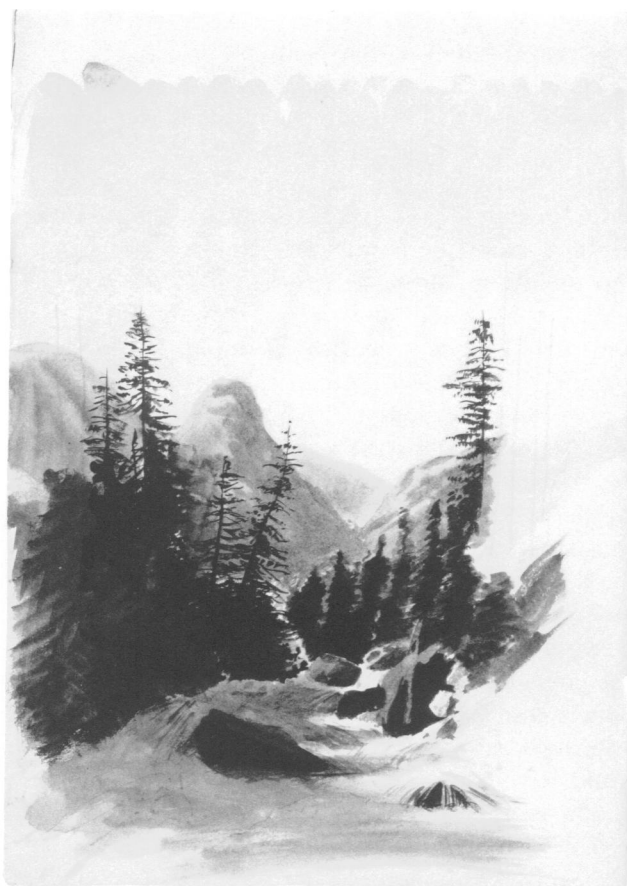


Figure 19. *Alpine View, Mürren* (50.130.146v). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing

The same increased confidence in brushwork that Sargent demonstrated in these details is seen throughout the sketchbook. Despite the brief duration of the tour from late June to late September, as the summer progressed, there was a subtle decrease in opacity and precision in the watercolors and an increase in transparency and fluidity. Notable among the drawings incorporating the pure watercolor technique with gouache passages or details are *Alpine View, Mürren* (Figure 19), followed by *Wellhorn and Wetterhorn* (Figure 20), and, toward the end of the tour, the *Faulhorn, Sept. 3* (Figures 23, 24), in which Sargent used what would become his characteristic palette of pinks, purples, and browns and abandoned all semblance of detail to capture the expanse of the panorama. In the *Faulhorn* composition, the sense of swift execution is further conveyed in the dark foreground, where the excess moisture has been lightly blotted, giving some play to the brightness of the paper below.

The effect of gaining light and augmenting tonal gradations by using a subtractive technique, or “taking out,” as in *Faulhorn*, was continually practiced by Sargent with various devices. In *Handek Falls* (Figure 8), the small, light-colored spots on the left representing the mist of the rushing water were produced with a spray, applied by bending back wet brush bristles and quickly releasing them over a painted passage, then lifting the softened color with a cloth. In *View of the Eiger from Mürren, Aug. 3* (Figure 17), as noted, Sargent had enlivened the rather

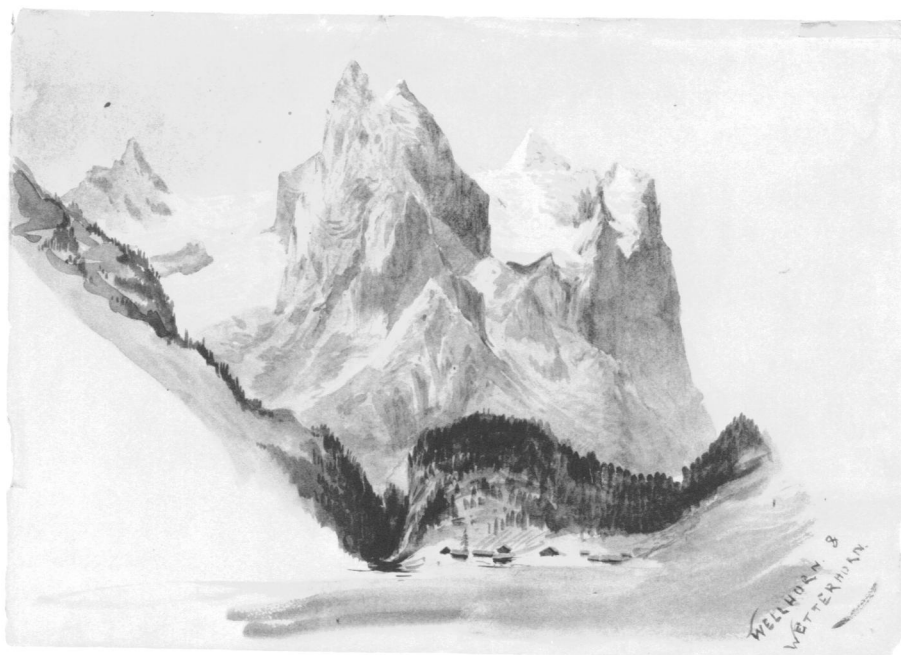


Figure 20. *Wellhorn and Wetterhorn* (50.130.146i). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing



Figure 21. *Schreckhorn, Eismeer* (50.130.146f). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing

dense blackish umber of the chalets by deeply scraping into the paint layer with a knife, whereas in the mist near the mountaintop he lightly rubbed away color with a cloth or finger. In other drawings, such as *Matterhorn from Zmutt Glacier* (Figure 10), the smoother surface of the highlights indicates that a less forceful hand was used. Here the paint was pushed aside with a brush handle while it was still wet. Based on examples by Turner, for whom scraping and scratching were indispensable for gaining the effect of flickering light, such techniques had become standard for watercolorists and many tools were available for producing them (Figure 29). Much information about this was provided in nineteenth-century artists' books, the choice ranging from erasers to razors depending on the wetness of the paint layer and the breadth of the mark desired. Ruskin, who was somewhat proscriptive about these effects, gave little explicit instruction for creating them. He cautioned against the use of the sponge and the handkerchief, and he criticized roughened paper as an artifice.⁴⁸ Proponents of the transparent manner favored such practices as a means of giving variety to aerial tones. In addition to employing many of these techniques, Sargent also experimented with the opaque manner of producing highlights. In *Mt. Pilatus* (50.130.146dd), which is painted in body color washes, the sea of clouds between the mountain ridges is accentuated



Figure 22. *Eismeer, Grindelwald* (50.130.146f). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing

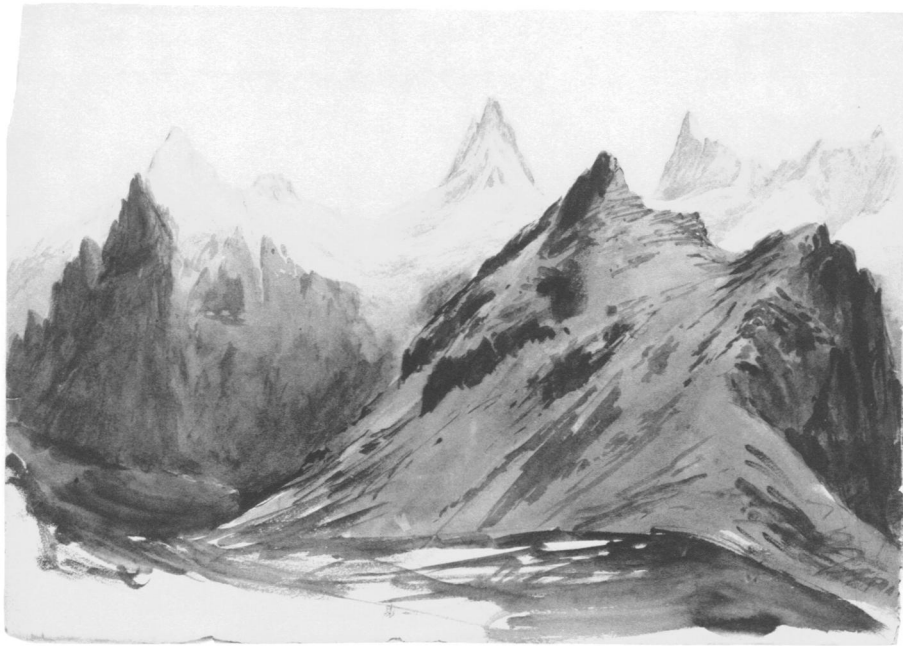


Figure 23. *Faulhorn Panorama, Sept. 3* (50.130.146ss). Watercolor, graphite underdrawing

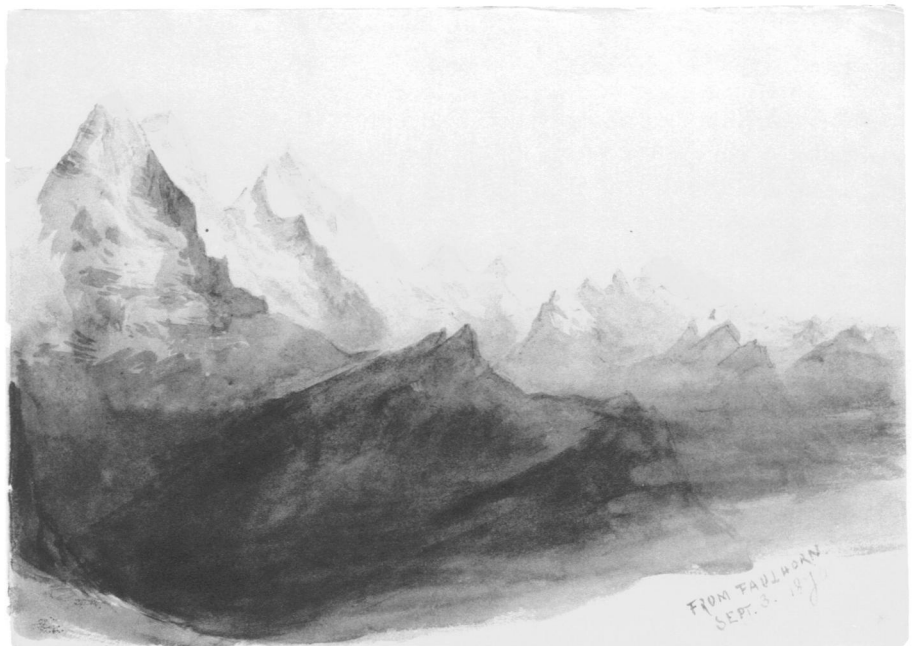


Figure 24. *Faulhorn Panorama, Sept. 3, right side* (50.130.146tt)

by lead white. Long outdated, this was a more brilliant pigment than Chinese white used elsewhere on this sheet, but it has blackened from exposure to hydrogen sulfide in the air. In *Jungfrau* (50.130.146B verso, watercolor on blue paper), the only drawing on a colored support pasted into the book, the snowcapped peak is painted in Chinese white. Dyed papers had only recently become commonplace owing to developments in papermaking, although they would never hold great appeal for

Sargent. Another means of highlighting that Sargent explored was leaving areas of paper unpainted. In the smaller, textured sheets, such as *Frau von Allmen and a Companion in an Interior* (Figure 26), awkward pinpoints of the white paper were revealed to represent reflections on the various surfaces. In the sketchbook, expanses of snow, ice, or clouds were suggested by larger areas of the reserve. Although the latter practice was criticized by Ruskin as appearing unfinished,⁴⁹ others praised



Figure 25. *View of the Bernese Oberland from Pilatus* (50.130.82q). Watercolor on textured paper, graphite underdrawing



Figure 26. *Frau von Allmen and a Companion in an Interior, Mürren* (50.130.146c verso). Watercolor on textured paper

it.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, with the advent of Impressionism and looser brushwork, this was to become an increasingly popular technique and one that Sargent was to perfect with great mastery as he matured.

There was much information available in the nineteenth century on the appropriateness of the different types of supports for particular techniques and mediums. Smooth, lightly sized paper, like that composing this sketchbook, was most suitable for pencil, which Sargent had perhaps kept in mind

early in the summer. These papers were at best only passable carriers for opaque paint. Sargent had been technically successful because this medium is rather dry when applied; the paint sits on the surface of the paper, thus causing little distortion of the sheet. However, this type of paper was basically unsuitable for transparent washes, which require a large amount of water to produce continuous passages of color without evidence of brushstroke. Furthermore, the wetness of the paint buckles the



Figure 27. John Singer Sargent, *Study of Foliage*. Watercolor on textured paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Francis Ormond, 1950 (50.130.821)

18

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Large Duck	- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -	0 2
Small Goose	- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -	0 2
Goose	- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -	0 2
Large Goose	Red and Gold Ties	- - - - -	- - - - -	0 3
Extra Small Swan	Green	- - - - -	- - - - -	0 5
Small Swan	Magenta	- - - - -	- - - - -	0 5
Middle Swan	Blue	- - - - -	- - - - -	0 10
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19

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Figure 28. George Rowney and Co., Materials for the watercolorist: brushes, portable easels. Bound in Henry Seward, *Manual of Colours* (London, 1889)

paper, and when the sheets are contained in a book, the excess moisture will contribute to the breakdown of the binding. Sargent's most technically effective use of transparent color at this time was on the smaller, thicker Not papers from the drawing blocks. The hollows and protrusions of these sheets were more suitable for enhancing the play of light through the tinted layers, and the heavier weight withstood wetting and scraping. It was this type of

sheet, even more richly surfaced, on which Sargent would execute his most brilliant works in later years.

Sargent's choice of technique may have been determined in part by the properties of his materials. Indeed, effects integral to transparent painting, such as pervasive aerial mists establishing a mood, time of day, or sense of distance—the production of which was methodically described in manuals favoring this type of handling—were best managed

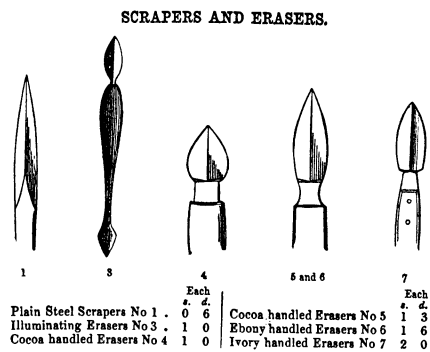


FIG. 15. Scrapers and erasers (*Winsor & Newton's List of Water Colors*, p. 41, bound in Aaron Penley, *The Elements of Perspective*, [London, 1866]).

Figure 29. Materials for the watercolors: scraper and erasers. Winsor and Newton. Bound in Aaron Penley, *The Elements of Perspective* (London, 1866)

on thick papers, which could be repeatedly wetted and blotted.⁵¹ However, an examination of the skies in the sketchbook watercolors reveals the young artist's determination to experiment with this more difficult type of brushwork despite the inappropriateness of the support. It is in studying this motif that his early struggles and successes with the transparent technique are most readily apparent. Whereas for the landscape elements he had used gradations and patches of opaque color, for the skies Sargent relied on the light-reflecting property of the white paper seen through the colored tints. In *Monte Rosa from Hörnli, Zermatt and Beis Glacier and Weisshorn* (Figures 11, 12) the pronounced blue wash is laid on in a series of broad, parallel brushstrokes, roughly following the contour of the mountain. This unintended striped effect, describing the width and square edge of his brush, resulted from applying the wash to a dry sheet: being fairly absorbent, the paper wicked up the color before it could flow. In another study, *Veisch Glacier, Eggischhorn, July 10* (Figure 13), the wash is thinner and more transparent. The tide lines at the upper left where the color has pooled suggest that Sargent, working with more dilute color, was probably attempting to rotate or slope the book to distribute the wash, in a manner that a loose sheet, pinned, stretched, or pasted to a board, would be handled when painting in the wet-brush method.⁵² A similar effect is seen in *Wellhorn and Wetterhorn* (Figure 20), but the subtle granulated ef-

fect in the sky implies that a sponge was used to blot up excess color. In the *Rhone Glacier* and *Matterhorn from Zmutt Glacier* (Figures 14, 10) the skies are rendered with a modulated, yet thin transparent wash, indicating that the paper must have been slightly dampened before the color was applied.

Sargent's inexperience with the watercolor technique is also revealed in the limited palette and tonal modulations he used for painting his skies. Contrary to recommendations in drawing manuals, until the end of the summer he invariably chose a wash of pure cobalt blue for a bright day and a gray wash for an overcast day. As his brushwork became freer, however, his color range also expanded. This is seen in *Faulhorn, Sept. 3* (50.130.146tt verso), in which he combined fluid blues and pinks, and *View of the Bernese Oberland from Pilatus* (painted in late August; Figure 25) in which he fused oranges with yellows. As in the other drawings, there is no evidence that Sargent attempted to improve upon nature. These nuances in color also seem to be based on fact. Indeed the last drawing evokes a moment his father was to describe a few weeks later when "John and I made a splendid and never-to-be-forgotten ascent of Pilatus . . . seeing the sun rise at 6 o'clock one morning. . . The glorious sun uprist, out of a sea of clouds which tossed in mountainous masses against the grey rocks, of which a few shot out their snow capped summits from out the white oceans."⁵³

Despite Sargent's lack of formal education when he set out on his first serious watercolor tour, his studied observation of nature and apparent resolve to master the various technical processes of this medium suggest that he was aware of current artistic practices. His salient intention may have been to be truthful to nature, as popular sentiment dictated, or simply to produce a souvenir of his travels. In the end, however, these drawings cannot be regarded merely as topographical Alpine studies. Here, as in his later work, Sargent was not, as Richard Ormond, his biographer, described, "indifferent to the subjects he selected to paint, but rather, he seems to have used them primarily as vehicles for statements about color, and light, and even paint itself."⁵⁴ Indeed, these novice works hold the essence of his mature vision.

NOTES

1. Letter, FitzWilliam Sargent to Emily Haskell, Florence, Italy, Oct. 10, 1870. Archives of American Art, reel 0317.
2. Shortly after Sargent's death in 1925, three pages were removed from "Splendid Mountain Watercolours" and given to the Fogg Museum; one sheet went to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and three to private collectors. "Album 3," inscribed "Venice, May 1870" (MMA 50.130.148) remained essentially intact. Two leaves had been cut from the binding but were inserted at the back of the book. For a discussion of the sequence of travel and the correspondence of FitzWilliam Sargent, see Stephen Rubin, *John Singer Sargent's Alpine Sketchbook: A Young Artist's Perspective* (New York, 1992).
3. Two sketchbooks dating from 1904 by Mary Sargent, which contain drawings and watercolors of Greece and the Near East, are in the collection of the MMA, "Album 5" (50.130.150) and "Album 6" (50.130.151).
4. Rubin, *Alpine Sketchbook*, pp. 9–14, summarizes Sargent's early education, family travels, and museum visits.
5. See annual exhibition checklists of the Society of Painters in Watercolours (established 1804, London) for listings of these artists.
6. Peter C. Marzio, *The Art Crusade: An Analysis of American Drawing Manuals, 1820–1860*, Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology 34 (Washington, D.C., 1976); Peter Bicknell and Jane Munro, *Gilpin to Ruskin: Drawing Masters and Their Manuals 1800–1860*, exh. cat., Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge, 1987–88) p. 7.
7. John Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing in Three Lessons for Beginners* was first published in London in June 1857. By October it was in its third edition, which was reprinted in 1860 and 1861. Excluding pirated American copies, 19,000 books were known to have been sold by 1904. See Lawrence Campbell, introduction, *Elements of Drawing*, (repr. ed., New York, 1971) p. v.
8. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, p. viii.
9. See Marzio, *The Art Crusade*, pp. 59–67, for a discussion of the philosophy of American drawing books; Bicknell and Munro, *Gilpin to Ruskin*, for British books.
10. Based on 18th-century principles of the Sublime and the Beautiful, followers of the Rev. William Gilpin modeled their ideas on the works of Claude, Salvator Rosa, Poussin, and the Dutch Italianates and believed in the concept of fixed laws that govern art and in the idealization and transformation of nature. See Jane Bayard, *Works of Splendor and Imagination: The Exhibition Watercolor 1770–1870* (New Haven, 1981) p. 13.
11. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, p. 13.
12. *Ibid.*, p. xvi. Ruskin held that drawing what one saw rather than what one knew "would get rid of rules altogether." The difficulty in learning them was greater than the gain for the beginner, p. 131.
13. Ruskin discussed these ideas in *Elements of Drawing*, p. 119, and in his conclusion to *Modern Painters* (London, 1846) I, p. 413.
14. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, p. 150.
15. For example, Thomas Rowbotham, *The Art of Sketching from Nature*, 5th ed. (London, 1851) p. 47; Rowland Mainwarung, *Instructive Gleanings, Moral and Scientific, on Painting and Drawing* (London, 1832) p. 53.
16. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, pp. 149–151; he also cautioned the student to avoid those subjects he ought not to like, such as things that were polished or that were too neat: the English countryside with its patchwork of hedges, its prim ruins, and its "orderly" cathedrals.
17. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, I, pp. 416–417.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 415.
19. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, p. 148, acknowledged that the pencil was a very precious instrument but was to be used only after one had mastered the pen and brush. He believed that it was unsatisfactory to convey the sharp touches on which the best detail depended, and that it would get shiny where force was desired. He recommended (p. 21) that the student use an H or HH pencil, terminology that is still current today. Both are very hard and thus yield a precise and light-colored line. Sargent also used a softer pencil, which is darker and does not hold a fine point.
20. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, p. 148. Nineteenth-century manuals regarded drawing not as an end, but as the foundation of watercolor painting. The sketchbook was generally considered "valuable for the information it contained, and the pleasure it gave in retrospect." See, for example, Mainwarung, *Instructive Gleanings*, p. 57.
21. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, p. 118. Ruskin encouraged the student to refer to various sources in order to understand the concept of governing lines and action (such as the plummy toss of foliage, the spring of a bush, the lines of waves), tonal gradations, and detail, including Turner's *Liber Studiorum* engravings, Dürer's woodcuts, and Cruickshank's prints. In his discussion on the drawing of trees, Ruskin cites James Duffield Harding's *Lessons on Trees* (London, 1850). There are no individual studies of trees in this sketchbook, although several in watercolor and graphite are found in the earlier pages of "Album 3" (MMA 50.130.148).
22. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, p. 136.
23. *Ibid.*, p. xiii.
24. Judging from its physical properties, we can assume the wax crayon Sargent used in this sketchbook was probably a lithographic crayon. Ruskin refers to coarse chalk for drawing common lithographs but notes that this is much more difficult to manage than the pencil (*Elements of Drawing*, p. 3), undoubtedly because of the readily worn broad tip, which would argue against precision, and the greater control required to produce tonal gradations. The history of the wax crayon is obscure. There are several types that were available in the 19th century. Jacques-Nicolas Conté used spermaceti wax to improve the working properties of his crayon in about 1840, but its main components were a fired combination of powdered graphite and clay. Lithographic crayon, which is composed of wax, tallow fat, soap, and black pigment, was also used independently of printing. Colored wax cray-

ons encased in wood are believed to have been developed in the 1830s in Germany. Unwrapped wax crayon, which may have evolved from lithographic crayon, was used for marking crates and for similar industrial purposes; it may also have been used for drawing and is possibly the immediate antecedent of the paper-wrapped wax crayon popular today. See Marjorie Shelley, "History of Crayon," *Encyclopedia of Art* (London, forthcoming).

25. Similar studies after classical sculpture from the Vatican were done in 1869, Fogg 1937.7.1, and *Sleeping Faun*, MMA 50.130.143x.

26. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, p. 136.

27. This means of drawing was to be recorded by Sargent's early biographer: "His general habit was to make the lightest indications in pencil to fix the relative position of objects and then after wetting the paper to paint with great rapidity." Evan Charteris, *John Sargent* (New York, 1927) p. 224.

28. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, pp. 146–147.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 118. Studio practices like these were traditional. They are recorded as customary for Gainsborough, who created dioramas containing broccoli, bits of coal, and glass as models for his idealized landscapes. See William Jackson, *The Four Ages* (London, 1798) pp. 167–168.

31. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, p. 185 n. 1; p. 189.

32. Barbara Novak, "The Meteorological Vision: Clouds," *Art in America* (Feb. 1980) p. 103. The study of clouds and their visual representation in 19th-century America and England were very much influenced by the spiritual hierarchy of clouds established by Goethe, who had in turn been inspired by Luke Howard's scientific classification in "Climate of London" (1818–20). Ruskin's poetic vision of this subject is discussed in *Modern Painters*, chap. "Truth of Skies."

33. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, Letter I, Exercise VIII, p. 44. Rock studies were very popular in the 19th century. See, for example, Ruskin's watercolor and gouache *Fragment of the Alps*, ca. 1855, and Charles Herbert Moore's watercolor and gouache *Rocks by the Water* (both Fogg Art Museum).

34. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

36. George Barnard, *The Theory and Practice of Landscape Painting in Water-Colours* (London, 1861) p. 123, described body color paint as looking "like rich, thick cream." A Winsor and Newton product catalogue, 1850, p. 12 (included in Rowbotham, *The Art of Sketching from Nature*) described how Chinese white, an arbitrary name created by this firm, could be mixed with any watercolor (i.e., moist or hard-cake), thereby forming an extensive range of body colors of the most superior kind. Painting in gouache, or body color, which was characteristic of the Pre-Raphaelite artists, became practicable only with the availability of Chinese white, because it did not oxidize and blacken as had lead white when exposed to hydrogen sulfide. It was, however, not generally applied in broad semiopaque washes, as Sargent did, but in smaller daubs, hatches, strokes, and stipples.

37. Aaron Penley, *A System of Water-Colour Painting* (3rd ed., London, 1851), and Barnard, *Theory and Practice*, pp. 116f.

38. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, pp. 137–141; Barnard, *Theory and Practice*, pp. 125–129, and his criticism of the purity of zinc white, p. 126; Martin Hardie, *British Water Colour Painting* (London, 1967) I, pp. 15–16.

39. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, p. 202.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 205. This was a reference to subtractive techniques, which were generally used by advocates of transparent painting.

42. Barnard, *Theory and Practice*, p. 127.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

44. The three types of paper commonly used by watercolorists were referred to as hot pressed, which had a smooth surface; cold pressed, which had a moderate texture; and not pressed, or Not, which had a rough surface.

45. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, pp. 222–227. This technique, a precursor of Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism, was claimed by Ruskin as "the most important process in good modern oil and watercolor painting" (pp. 129–130). The precedent for stippling in various colors, each color surrounded by tiny specks of white, is miniature painting.

46. Barnard, *Theory and Practice*, p. 118.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 123, describes the process of dragging. See also Hardie, *British Water Colour Painting*, p. 34.

48. Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, p. 206 n. 1. He also criticized textured sheets as "coarse, gritty and sandy . . . fit only for blotterers and blunderers."

49. *Ibid.*, p. 214.

50. Barnard, *Theory and Practice*, p. 65.

51. Penley, *A System*, pp. 12–15; Barnard, *Theory and Practice*, p. 116. Charts listing the appropriate colors were given in these texts as well as detailed instructions for laying in the tints in the sky and foreground.

52. This was a standard practice. The drawing board was to be sloped at a sufficient angle, about 45 degrees, so that the tint flowed freely over the surface; the excess would be soaked up with blotting paper, cloth, or a sponge. See Penley, *A System*, p. 12; Rowbotham, *Art of Sketching*, p. 32; Barnard, *Theory and Practice*, pp. 113, 115.

53. Letter, FitzWilliam Sargent to George Bemmis, Oct. 15, 1870, Massachusetts Historical Society (Boston), Repository of the George Bemmis Papers.

54. Richard Ormond, *John Singer Sargent, Paintings, Drawings, Watercolors* (New York, 1970) p. 69. For a discussion of Sargent's mature techniques, see Judith C. Walsh, "Observations on the Watercolor Techniques of Homer and Sargent," *American Traditions in Watercolor*, exh. cat. (Worcester, Mass., 1987–88) pp. 45–65.