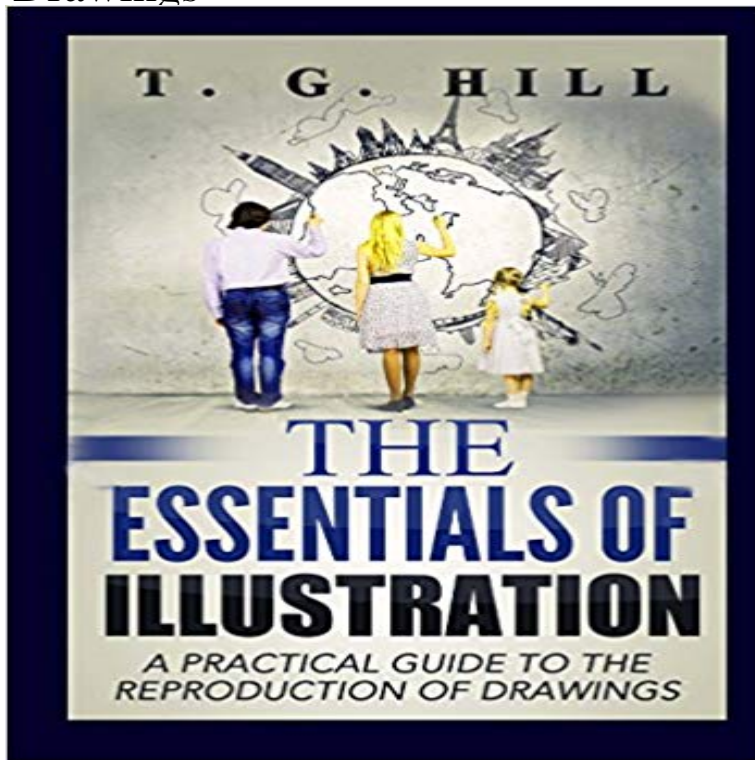


The Essentials of Illustration: A Practical Guide to the Reproduction of Drawings



MODERN scientific publications, although they may in some or even many cases equal in their scientific quality the memoirs of earlier workers, do not, on the average, reach a high standard as regards illustration. For instance, in Great Britain botany is pre-eminent in its morphological aspects; it should therefore follow that the illustrations, which form so important a part of such papers, should be beyond reproach. This is not always so, a fact which must be patent to anyone with the slightest critical knowledge who looks through a typical journal. This is a fact much to be regretted, since many of the earlier scientists were accomplished draughtsmen and, indeed, often artists; in this connection the Hookers and Professor Daniel Oliver may be mentioned. The implication is not intended that there are no good amateur draughtsmen nowadays; there are, and in some cases possessed of great ability. The beautiful work of Church in his *Floral Mechanisms* may be cited as an example. It may, of course, be argued that any picture which serves to illustrate the particular feature is good enough; this is the contention of one who takes an insufficient pride in his work. A feature worthy of an illustration deserves the best the author can produce, more especially as a literary form is still, fortunately, preserved or, at any rate, aimed at. The reason for indifferent illustrations is primarily due to bad or mediocre drawings, or to their unsuitability for the kind of reproduction in view. With regard to the first point: this lack of draughtsmanship often obtains; when education entirely replaces mere instruction, it is to be hoped that all students of science will be trained in the rudiments of drawing. Meanwhile the difficulty can be partly overcome, as will be seen later on, by the simple means of drawing on an enlarged scale, in order that in reproduction reduction can be made. The

second reason, the onus of which also falls on the authors, is a lack of knowledge regarding the kind of drawing suitable for the different modes of re-production; this is a very important point, for technical conditions govern even genius itself. Authors, however, are not always to blame; it would appear that even editors sometimes are wanting in the requisite knowledge, for we have known straight-forward line drawings reproduced by half-tone; in other cases the paper used is unsuitable for the reproduction and, at other times, the printers are at fault. With a view to remedying, at any rate in part, these deficiencies, a course of lectures, arranged by the Board of Studies in Botany of the University of London, was delivered in the Lent term of 1913 in the Department of Botany of University College, London. In gratifying the wish expressed by some that these lectures should be given a more permanent dress, the author feels that some apology is necessary, for he can lay no claim to authoritative knowledge of much of the subject-matter; questions relating to the graphic arts and to illustrations, however, have always been of interest to him, so that he has tried various experiments, often with disastrous results, and thus has gained some experience. In these matters the author has benefited much through his association with Professor F. W. Oliver, who, characteristically, has been ever ready to discuss these problems with, and to place his knowledge and experience at the disposal of the author.

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