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MASTERS IN ART

Sir Edwin Landseer

ENGLISH SCHOOL





LANDSEER
SPANIELS OF KING CHARLES' BREED
NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON



LANDSEER
THE TWO DOGS
SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON





LANDSEER
THE MONARCH OF THE GLEN
OWNED BY T. J. BARRATT, ESQ., LONDON

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SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON



LANDSEER

LOW LIFE—HIGH LIFE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF BRITISH ART, LONDON

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PHOTOGRAPH BY HANFSTAENGL

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LANDSEER
SUSPENSE
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MASTERS IN ART PLATE VIII
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LANDSEER
A JACK IN OFFICE
SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON



LANDSEER
THE HUNTED STAG
NATIONAL GALLERY OF BRITISH ART, LONDON

MASTERS IN ART. PLATE X
PHOTOGRAPH BY LANGSTIEREN
[1891]



PORTRAIT OF LANDSEER BY HIMSELF
OWNED BY THE KING OF ENGLAND

Landseer painted this picture in 1865, when he was sixty-three years old. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in that year and presented by the painter to the Prince of Wales, now King Edward VII. Not only does it offer one of the best examples of Landseer's work in portraiture, but it is the most characteristic existing likeness of the artist. The two dogs looking critically over his shoulders at the drawing which he is making give the picture its name—'The Connoisseurs.' Landseer's appearance is described in the biographical sketch which follows.

Sir Edwin Landseer

BORN 1802: DIED 1873
ENGLISH SCHOOL

EDWIN LANDSEER was born on March 7, 1802, at what was then 71 Queen Anne Street East, later known as 33 Foley Street, London. His father, John Landseer, was an engraver of note as well as an able writer on art, and took the keenest interest in the artistic education of his three sons, Thomas, Charles, and Edwin, all of whom attained to more or less distinction, the first as an engraver, the two last as painters, but of whom, Edwin, the youngest, became by far the most famous.

John Landseer believed that an ordinary education was of no advantage to an artist, but rather a hindrance to his career, and as Edwin showed no fondness for books, "always running away from his teachers, and always drawing," his father encouraged his natural tastes by taking him at an early age—as soon, indeed, as he could hold a pencil with steadiness—into the open fields which in that day were in the near neighborhood of his home, and there, having lifted the little fellow over the stile which formed the entrance to what his father in after years would point to as "Edwin's first studio," would bid him sketch the cows and sheep grazing there. Sometimes Edwin was accompanied on such expeditions by his brothers, but as he grew older he would often start off alone to spend hours in the fields drawing the animals about him, more than content to stay until his father went in search of him later in the day, when his drawings would be criticized and their faults corrected on the spot.

Some of these youthful studies by Landseer are preserved in the South Kensington Museum, London, and from the notes they bear, made by his father, we see that many of them, surprisingly clever for so young a child, were made by the artist when only five or six years old. At the age of seven Landseer had learned to etch, and before he was twelve he had begun to paint in oils. In 1813, when eleven years old, he won the prize of the silver palette of the Society of Arts for drawings of animals, and in the three following years the Isis silver medal of the same society was awarded him.

Wherever animals might be seen and studied there Edwin Landseer was to be found, sketch-book in hand. Sometimes he visited Exeter 'Change, a

building near his father's house in which a show of wild animals was held; sometimes he found his subjects in the Tower of London, where until 1834 it was the custom to keep lions, leopards, tigers, and bears; and in both places he made excellent studies of wild beasts to add to his earlier sketches of domestic animals.

In the year 1815 Landseer received some valuable suggestions from the painter Benjamin R. Haydon, who lent him his dissections of a lion to copy, urged him to study anatomy, as well as the cartoons of Raphael, now in the South Kensington Museum, and the great Parthenon sculptures, then recently brought to England by Lord Elgin and known as the Elgin marbles; and in short, did much to encourage the boy whose talent was so manifest. In this same year, Landseer, then thirteen years old, made his first appearance in public as an exhibitor at the Royal Academy, London. In the catalogue of the exhibition he is recorded as "Master E. Landseer, H., 33 Foley St.," the letter "H" signifying an honorary exhibitor, in which capacity alone he was accepted, as his youth precluded him from being regarded as an artist in full. The subjects of the pictures exhibited—both drawings—were 'A Mule,' and 'Pointer Bitch and Puppy;' this last was especially noteworthy as the first work of an English artist since Hogarth's day who had portrayed a dog "with due regard to individuality and character."

The following year Landseer entered the schools of the Royal Academy, where he was a diligent student and where he won all hearts by his genial disposition, his gentle manners, and his distinct personal charm. It is related that Henry Fuseli, then at the head of the Academy, if he failed to find Landseer in the room with the other students, would at once ask, "Where is my little dog-boy?" By the painter C. R. Leslie, Landseer is described at this period as "a curly-headed youngster dividing his time between Polito's wild beasts at Exeter Change and the Royal Academy Schools."

In the year 1818 Landseer exhibited at the Society of Painters in Oil and Water-colors a picture entitled 'Fighting Dogs Getting Wind,' which attracted general attention and called forth enthusiastic praise. It was purchased by Sir George Beaumont, a fashionable amateur of the day whose patronage of the youthful artist of sixteen helped to increase his popularity and establish his fame. A succession of pictures followed, appearing in exhibitions at the Royal Academy, the British Institution, the Society of Painters in Oil and Water-colors, and at the Society of British Artists. Each work added to the painter's rapidly won reputation—a reputation that was by no means confined to the world of artists and people of his own social standing, but extended to the most fashionable circles of London society, where he was welcomed, courted, admired, and made much of. His eminently social nature, his wit, gaiety, and charm of manner, all combined to render him a general favorite. His pictures met with ready sales and his course now became little short of a triumphal progress.

In 1824 he went with C. R. Leslie to Scotland, and there visited Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford, where he made numerous drawings of the poet surrounded by his dogs. These drawings were used later as studies for finished

pictures. In company with Leslie Landseer traveled through the lake district and the Highlands of Scotland, and was everywhere so impressed by the scenery that he rarely failed after this to visit Scotland each year. "That country, with its deer and its mountains," writes Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse, "was thenceforth the land of his imagination. He began to study and paint animals more in their relation to man. Lions, bulls, and pigs gave way before the red deer; and even dogs, though they retained their strong hold upon his art, were hereafter treated rather as the companions of man than in their natural character of rat-catchers and fighters."

In 1826 Landseer, then twenty-four, was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy at the earliest age that was in conformity with the laws of that body. Shortly before this time he had moved from his father's house in Foley Street, and from the comfortless and inconvenient studio which he occupied in Upper Conway Street, to a house in St. John's Wood, near Regent's Park, where he was in possession of a garden, and a barn which was soon converted into a studio. The house, No. 1 St. John's Wood Road, was added to and improved from time to time, as the painter's needs required and his increasing wealth allowed. Here the remainder of his life—a period of nearly fifty years—was spent, and here the greater part of his life's work accomplished. Landseer never married. His sister, Mrs. Mackenzie, or an unmarried sister, Jessie, kept house for him, and his home was always a favorite meeting-place for his large circle of friends, and the scene of many social gatherings of noted people.

"There were few studios more charming to visit than Landseer's," writes a correspondent of Mrs. Ritchie's (then Miss Thackeray). "Besides the genial artist and his beautiful pictures, the *habitués* of his 'workshop,' as he called it, belonged to the *élite* of London society, especially the men of wit and distinguished talent—none more often there than Count D'Orsay with his good-humored face, his ready wit, and delicate flattery. 'Landseer,' he would call out at his entrance, 'keep the dogs off me'—referring to the pictures—'I want to come in and some of them will bite me; that fellow in the corner is growling furiously!' Then there was Mulready, still looking upon Landseer as the young student, and fearing that all this incense would spoil him for future work; and Fonblanque, who maintained from first to last that Landseer was on the top rung of the ladder, and when at the exhibition of some of the artist's later works he heard it said, 'They are not equal to his former ones,' exclaimed, 'It is hard upon Landseer to flog him with his own laurels.'"

In 1831 Landseer was elected to the full membership of the Royal Academy. His pictures had now become well-known works, the popularity of which was vastly increased by the engravings made from them by his brother Thomas and many other engravers of more or less note. Landseer was a child in business matters, and his affairs were managed first by his father and later by his friend Mr. Jacob Bell, who secured for him the engraving rights of his works. These formed the chief source of the artist's income, and contributed far more than did the moderate sums that he obtained for his paintings towards the large fortune that he amassed.

It was Landseer's custom to place a clean canvas, or panel, upon his easel and leave it there untouched for several days, or until he had completely thought out the subject that he was to paint. This done, he would take up his palette and brushes and set to work, and in an astonishingly short space of time the picture would be finished. There are countless stories told of his rapidity in working—of how he completed a large picture of 'A Sleeping Bloodhound' in three days; finished another of 'Rabbits' in three-quarters of an hour; painted a portrait of Lord Ashburton in a single sitting; and for his friend Mr. Wells, completed a picture of a spaniel and a wounded rabbit—both animals the size of life—in two hours and a half, and one of a fallow-deer for the same friend, who used to relate that one Sunday morning as he was about to go to church the panel for this picture was placed on the easel of the painter, who was his guest at the time, and that when he returned from morning service the picture was finished.

Landseer's technical powers were no less amazing. "Under his hand," writes Mr. Redgrave, "a single drag of the brush gave a more effectual rendering of the coat of an animal than could be achieved by a painstaking imitation of each single hair." As an instance of his dexterity a story is told that upon the occasion of a large party assembled one evening at the house of a gentleman in London, the conversation having turned upon the subject of feats of skill with the hand, one of the ladies present remarked that it would be impossible for any one, however skilful, to draw two things at once. "Oh, I can do that," said Landseer quietly; "give me two pencils and I will show you." The pencils were brought, and Landseer, taking one in each hand, drew simultaneously and unhesitatingly the profile of a stag's antlered head with one hand, and with the other the perfect outline of the head of a horse. Both drawings were strong and vigorous; that drawn with the left hand in no way inferior to its companion sketch.

In person Landseer was somewhat below middle height. His face was broad and his forehead well formed. His complexion was fresh, his eyes fine, and his hair, light brown in youth and white in later life, was curly. Perhaps on the whole his face was not marked by force of character, but for all that his appearance was thoroughly manly and his expression frank and open. It has been said that he was wholly without envy or jealousy of others, and that his estimation of his own powers was absurdly low. "If people only knew as much about painting as I do," he said on one occasion, "they would never buy my pictures." His keen insight into the characters of animals, especially of dogs, was well known, and with the infallible instinct of those creatures they invariably recognized in Landseer a friend and master. His power over them and his marvelous way of winning their affection was unflinching. After the loss of a favorite terrier, Brutus—a loss from which he never entirely recovered—he did not confine his affections to any one dog, but was usually to be seen surrounded by half a dozen, who accompanied him in his walks and were his constant companions at home.

After 1839 Landseer painted several portraits of the English nobility, sometimes introducing likenesses of his sitters into his large figure groups,

sometimes, and especially was this the case with children, giving accessories to his portraits that converted them into subject pictures to which such titles as 'Little Red Ridinghood,' 'The Naughty Child,' 'Beauty's Bath,' etc., were appended. None of these pictures, however, equaled the painter's portrayals of animal life, nor did they add materially to his reputation. From the beginning to the end of his career his forte lay distinctly in his interpretation of the natures of dumb beasts, notably the dog.

Landseer was a brilliant conversationalist, full of humor and anecdote. His manner of telling a story was graphic, and marked with a certain dramatic power. An enthusiastic sportsman, he was nevertheless somewhat of a trial to the Scotch "gillies," or attendants, who accompanied him upon his shooting expeditions during his yearly visits to the Highlands of Scotland, for it sometimes happened that just as a magnificent shot came in the way Landseer would thrust his gun into their hands with a hurried, "Here, take this," and quickly pulling his sketch-book and pencil from his pocket would proceed to make a study of the deer with never a thought of taking its life.

In 1840 Landseer's health broke down from overwork, and from the demands of a social life that held only too great a fascination for him and produced a somewhat detrimental effect upon his character. In short, the deference shown him, and the flattery, amounting to adulation, accorded him by his fashionable friends, spoiled him to a certain extent; he became affected in his manner, and his old friends deplored the partial eclipse of the finer and more genuine qualities in the man they loved. In company with one of these old friends, Mr. Jacob Bell, Landseer now made a tour through Belgium and Switzerland, returning home by way of Paris. This trip, during which he did nothing in the way of his work, proved the refreshment that his over-taxed nerves needed, and he went back to London benefited by the rest.

From the time of her accession to the throne of England in 1837 Queen Victoria was one of Landseer's most enthusiastic admirers and one of his chief patrons. Her regard and friendship for the painter were shared by the prince consort, and many were the visits that Landseer paid the royal pair at Balmoral Castle in Scotland and at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, where he was kept busily employed in painting pictures of the pet animals belonging to the queen and to Prince Albert, portraits of old and faithful servants, and even portraits of the queen herself and of her consort, which were followed by those of the young princes and princesses from their earliest childhood. We hear, too, of pictures painted by their favorite artist for the royal couple to be given as birthday presents to each other, such commissions being always executed in secrecy. On one occasion, for instance, when Landseer was engaged in painting, at the request of the queen, a picture of Prince Albert's favorite greyhound, Eos, in which the prince's hat and gloves were to be used as accessories, a messenger arrived in hot haste at the artist's studio with an order from the queen to send back those articles immediately, as the prince had asked for them and on no account must he suspect what was on foot.

Once the young queen herself rode on horseback unannounced to the door of the artist's studio in St. John's Wood Road, and waited while in obedience to her summons he hurriedly changed his coat, and mounted a groom's horse to accompany her on her ride in order that he might make a study for an equestrian portrait of her Majesty.

In addition to his unofficial position as court painter Landseer gave lessons to the queen and to Prince Albert in the art of etching, in which both proved apt pupils. There was little or no formality in his intercourse with the royal couple, with whom, indeed, he was on terms of such intimate friendship that when visiting them in Scotland or on the Isle of Wight he would spend hours in hunting or in playing billiards with Prince Albert, or would take long walks with the queen, and help her in her sketching with his criticisms.

After the death of the prince consort this personal intercourse with the queen ceased, and Landseer, whose sensitive nature was given to fancying slights where none were intended, was deeply hurt, and never understood that even if invitations to the royal palaces had ceased, the queen's regard for him might still remain unchanged, as was proved to be the case when in 1850 she conferred upon him the honor of knighthood.

During the next ten years Sir Edwin Landseer, as he was now known, produced many of his finest works. In 1855 his picture 'The Sanctuary' won for him the great gold medal of the Universal Exposition held in Paris in that year. Four years later he was commissioned by Lord Derby, on behalf of the English nation, to model four lions for the base of the monument erected in Trafalgar Square, London, in commemoration of the victory won off Cape Trafalgar by Lord Nelson. This work occupied much of Landseer's time during the next eight years. On January 31, 1867, the colossal lions cast in bronze were unveiled in their places.

In 1865 the presidency of the Royal Academy, made vacant by the death of Sir Charles Eastlake, was offered to Landseer by the unanimous vote of his fellow members. This honor, however, was declined by the painter, who felt that his health was not equal to the responsibilities which such a position entailed. Landseer's health had, indeed, shown signs of seriously breaking down. Extreme nervous excitability manifested itself in various ways, and attacks of mental distress undermined his constitution. His eyesight, too, began to fail; he became conscious of technical errors in his work which critics readily attributed to weakening powers. This was especially painful to a man whose delight it had formerly been, as a sympathetic critic has said, "to put a magnifying-glass into the hand of an artist friend and bid him examine the painting of the eye of a bird. He had the same desire for minute finish at the last as in his youthful days, and it was one of his sorest trials that he had to paint in glasses just when the rage for Preraphaelite finish was rising." A morbid sensitiveness, to which he had long been a prey, caused Landseer to suffer unduly from censure and from imagined slights from his friends. It has been said that if he had been willing at this time to forego the pleasures of society and lead a quieter life all might have gone well, but he was unable

to resist the gaiety and excitement that he had grown to depend upon. Attacks of depression, amounting at times to mental anguish, became more frequent, and these, combined with increasing physical feebleness and pain, saddened his last years. There were, it is true, bright moments when his powers reasserted themselves. Among his last works, 'The Swannery Invaded by Eagles,' exhibited in 1869, and 'The Sick Monkey' in the following year, give ample evidence that his hand had not forever lost its cunning.

It was hoped that the more bracing air of Scotland or the north of England might benefit the painter's health; but such did not prove to be the case, and finally, after repeated visits to the north, he returned to London, and to his house in St. John's Wood Road, never to leave home again. During the last months of his life he would sometimes walk around the paths of his garden leaning on his sister's arm, but most of his time was passed in his studio, where he painted almost to the last and where it was his wish that he might die.

On October 1, 1873, the end came. On the eleventh of that month Sir Edwin Landseer was buried with full honors in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, where his grave has since been marked by a sculptured slab above it bearing a medallion portrait of the painter, beneath which is modeled in high relief a copy of his most pathetic and one of his greatest works, 'The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner.'

The Art of Landseer

RICHARD MUTHER

'THE HISTORY OF MODERN PAINTING'

LANDSEER was the spoiled child of fortune. In high favor at court, honored by the fashionable world, and tenderly treated by criticism, he went on his way triumphant. The region over which he held sway was narrow, but he stood out in it as in life, powerful and commanding. . . .

One reason of his artistic success is perhaps due to that in him which was inartistic—to his effort to make animals more beautiful than they really are, and to make them the medium for expressing human sentiment. It is this that distinguishes Landseer to his disadvantage from really great animal-painters like Potter, Snyders, Troyon, and Rosa Bonheur. He paints the human temperament beneath the animal mask. His stags have expressive countenances, and his dogs appear to be gifted with reason and even speech. His disposition to bring animals on the stage, as if they were the actors of tragic, melodramatic, or farcical scenes, made him a peculiar favorite with the great mass of people. Nor were his picture-stories merely easy to read and understand, for the characteristic titles he invented for them excited curiosity as much as the most carefully selected name of a novel. But this search after points and sentimental anecdotes only came into prominence in his last period, when his technique had degenerated and he gave way to a shiny polish and

a forced elegance. In his middle period Landseer painted masterpieces which set him by the side of the best animal-painters of all times and nations. These pictures, in their animation and simple naturalness, are indeed precious examples of the fresh and delicate observation peculiar to him at that time. They are painted with all the love and joy of a child of nature, and that accounts for their strength, their convincing power, and their vivid force. It is as if he had become possessed of a magic cap, with which he could draw close to animals without being observed, and surprise their nature and their inmost life. . . .

Horses, which Leonardo da Vinci, Rubens, Velasquez, Wouverman, and the earlier English artists delighted to render, Landseer painted but seldom, and when he painted them it was with a less penetrating comprehension. Lions, which had been represented in savage passion or in quiet dignity by artists from Rubens to Decamps, were for him also a subject of long and exhaustive studies, which had their result in the four colossal lions round the base of Nelson's monument in Trafalgar Square, London. Stags and roes were really first introduced into painting by Landseer. His principal field of study for these animals was the Highlands of Scotland, where he painted them fighting on the mountain slope, swimming the lake, or as they stand gazing in their quiet beauty. But of all animals dogs were Landseer's peculiar specialty. He may be said to have discovered the dog. That of Snyders was a treacherous, snarling cur; that of Bewick a robber and a thief. Landseer has made him the companion of man, an adjunct of human society, the generous friend and true comrade who is the last mourner at the shepherd's grave. Landseer first studied his noble countenance and his thoughtful eyes, and in so doing opened a new province to art.

MCDUGALL SCOTT

'SIR EDWIN LANDSEER'

LANDSEER'S work divides itself into two classes: the painting of animals as animals, and the painting of animals as creatures possessed of all or some of the human attributes. In the latter style only does the artist lay claim to any distinct originality or to the founding of a school. But here he can make good his claim. For judging by those painters of animals who were his predecessors or contemporaries, none had ever attacked their subject from Landseer's standpoint; none had treated them so obviously as intellectually sentient human beings, only removed from man by their lack of the medium of human speech. It is at the point where he departs from the accepted canons of animal-painting that adverse criticisms of him arise, for no critic has ever suggested a word against his purely technical treatment of animals. Studying his method, as typified in what have been called his "anecdotal" pictures, in the spirit in which they were painted, we can, however, construct an apology for much that would otherwise be unconvincing and false.

Landseer had a very real message to give to the world, a message of kindness and compassion, of sympathy and trust; and he felt best able to give this message through the medium of his dumb friends, where other men had chosen religious subjects or broad poetic schemes. To the dog in particular

he went for help in his task, as being the first friend of man; the dog he invests with the greatest meed of human intelligence, and for this very reason many of his dog pictures are narrower in their conception, more constrained in their execution, and less convincing as poetic compositions than his greater stag or lion studies. With the dog he often strained the rational limits set about him, merging the semi-tragic into the ridiculous. Landseer was, however, a poet at soul; his poetry is often hidden under a mass of artifice, his philosophy tainted with a strain of the absurd, yet we may not deny a deep meaning to the spirit of his work. . . .

It is, however, necessary to recognize the fact that the attribution of human instincts to animals did most sadly destroy the finer and innermost qualities of much of Landseer's work. Undoubtedly, as has been said, the artist viewed his effort as a means to an end, as a means whereby he could give his message more vividly to the world; but nevertheless even this view does not materially raise the art-level of some of his "anecdotal" pictures. We cannot get away from the fact that had he escaped from the parodying of humanity in the brute species a greater number of his pictures would have attained the perfection of the highest standard in his branch of art. His stag pictures must, for instance, always be admirable, for in them he discovered and interpreted the essence of splendid animal majesty; the noble creatures are imbued with something very far above mere humanity, they are the king-like children of nature. We would here place such pictures as 'The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner' and 'Suspense' outside the ordinary class of the "anecdotal" works. The humanizing effort is perhaps in them, but the word seems hardly to embrace the real underlying idea. Let us turn instead to that larger class of works of which 'The Cat's-paw,' 'The Larder Invaded,' 'A Jack in Office,' 'The Traveled Monkey,' and 'Alexander and Diogenes' are typical examples, to see where his idea went essentially wrong. In each and all of the pictures cited, the petty introduction of human instincts has marred and disturbed the broad ideas of free nature.

That Landseer, with his acute knowledge of the animal world, should ever have attempted to mix up such antithetically opposed qualities as the artificial emotions of humanity and the primitive instincts of the brute world must always seem a curious error of judgment. In defence, however, of the false sentiment that marks some of his work, we would point out the fact that he lived at a most unfortunate time. The early and mid-Victorian epoch was impregnated with a false and mawkish sentimentality. Art in England and on the Continent was at a low ebb, and it is scarcely strange that the spirit of the day should have crept into painting as it did into literature. It was not so much that Landseer could not rise to heights of true and poetic pathos, for some of his pictures definitely prove that he could, as that he took his color from his surroundings, and acceded to the demands of his time. . . .

Up to the year 1824 Landseer's pictures lack breadth of conception and ease of execution, but in that year, after his first visit to Scotland, a marked change became apparent in his style. We note an increased power, a truer idea of the harmonious relationship of subject with subject, broader tones,

and, if possible, a deeper insight into animal nature. As to the rapidity of his work, so far from detracting from its excellence, his pictures seem often to gain in strength and purpose through the quickened deftness of his touch. Perhaps he threw more concentration into them, or perhaps his love for foreign details had to be curbed when he was working against time; at any rate with increased rapidity came a greater unity of idea and harmony of execution. . . .

Landseer was a master of draftsmanship. He has been called an excellent *designer* of animals, a statement which in its terseness is a little unjust, with the inference contained in it that he was so much and no more. He was a great deal more, but perhaps his power as a draftsman is one of the most salient points about his work. It would be difficult among his more mature works to find an instance of really false animal drawing, though sometimes his treatment of the dog is not convincing by reason of a constraint of facial expression. For this his humanizing method is to be blamed, rather than the technical treatment of the drawing. The beauty of truth has in these cases given place to a far-fetched expression of idea. This occasional false rendering of expressions does not, however, alter the fact that as a draftsman of animals, working on a thorough knowledge of his subject, Landseer stands without a rival. This is the more vividly apparent when he is dealing with the more noble members of the animal kingdom; true artist that he was, he never tried to infuse into the stag or the lion that rather strained personality of his domestic animals.

With the human figure Landseer was not at his best; the subject had no real attractions for him, and in it he never attained any high standard. As often as not the drawing is false, the anatomy incorrect, the attitudes full of uneasy constraint. The same may be said of his portraits, for though in his own day he had a distinct vogue as a portrait-painter, he does not stand high to-day in the public esteem. With the exception of the posthumous portrait of Sir Walter Scott, and the one of himself in 'The Connoisseurs,' his efforts in this line were wooden and weak.

Landseer's pictures do not possess any rich glow of color, which, as a rule, seems to emanate from the surface rather than from the depths of the canvas. In many cases his subjects demanded a subdued treatment of soft grays and browns, with no vivid contrasts. His manner of painting the coats of his animals is wonderful; there is a velvety texture about them which is quite realistic, and one can almost feel the thickness and soft resistance of the hair. . . .

In composition Landseer was successful only so long as he kept his pictures simple. When he was called on to introduce crowds, more especially crowds of men and women, into his canvas, he failed to gain anything but a series of disjointed groups. In this respect he did not improve as time went on. He was too fond, moreover, of crowding his canvases with irritating adjuncts and details. It is in composition in "breadth" and "height" that he most obviously fails, for his "depth" is good; the groupings recede well into their respective planes. Perhaps his distance and middle distance are too intricately detailed and brought too much forward, but his real faults lie more in the grouping of each respective plane. . . .

Landseer could be deeply imaginative, but, to use an expression taken from logic, his paintings are types of "intension" rather than "extension." That is, he painted the attributes of his animal with relation to the animal itself, and not the relations of his animal to the world of his picture. With a few exceptions, he painted the animal for its own merits and not as a factitive part of a whole composition.

Let us, however, admire Landseer's style in its own light—in the light of the genius which could discover and interpret the instincts, feelings, and sentient nature of the animals, portraying this inner nature with a truthful mastery of his art, and a thorough knowledge of form and substance.

JOHN C. VAN DYKE

'OLD ENGLISH MASTERS'

THE most precocious and perhaps the most popular of all English painters was Sir Edwin Landseer. He was acclaimed a genius before he had reached man's estate, and during the seventy years of his life he painted pictures that were circulated through engravings in all the countries of Christendom. . . .

It is not often that an artist attains such wide-spread popularity, and usually there are reasons for it other than artistic. It was so in Landseer's case. He forced the note of animal life (especially the dog) by humanizing it, giving it emotions and sentiments pertinent to humanity, making it tell a sentimental or a funny story. And he forced the note of art by a "smart" painting of surfaces and textures which disguised a want of depth and covered up a lack of substance. Not that Landseer was always superficial, but that his popularity was gained by his least meritorious performance. It is an old story in art. Correggio is still popularly known as the painter of that sugary little 'Reading Magdalene' at Dresden—a picture that he never saw; and Millet, who had a command of line worthy of Michelangelo, lives in the popular mind as the painter of the 'Angelus,' an exaggerated story in paint done in the artist's poorest manner. . . .

After Landseer's trip to Scotland his subject changed somewhat, he became fond of deer, mountains, and Scotch heather, paying less attention to lions and tigers, but always clinging to the dog. He now began painting the dog in connection with his master; and after he had been made a Royal Academician, in 1831, he began to burlesque his subject in such popular successes as 'Low Life—High Life,' 'A Jack in Office,' and 'Laying Down the Law'—all of them pictures of dogs, posed in imitation of humanity. . . .

At his best Landseer was a good draftsman and a very facile handler of the brush. All told, his career was remarkably successful, but there is a sharp line of demarcation to be drawn between his popular success and his artistic success. The latter was not slight. He had the artistic sense, but in the roar of applause that went up over the caricatured dog it was lost to sight and forgotten save by his fellow-craftsmen.

COSMO MONKHOUSE

'DICTIONARY OF NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY'

AS an artist Landseer was thoroughly original, striking out a new path for himself by treating pictorially the analogy between the character of animals and men. His principal forerunner in this was Hogarth, who occasionally introduced animals in his pictures from the same motive. But Landseer was more playful in his humor, more kind in his satire, trying only to show what was human in the brute; whereas Hogarth only displayed what was brutal in the man. But Landseer was a poet as well as a humorist, and could strike chords of human feeling almost as truly and strongly as if his subjects had been men instead of dogs and deer.

His compositions are nearly always marked by a great feeling for elegance of line, but in his later works his color, despite his skill in imitation, was apt to be cold and crude. As a draftsman he was exceedingly elegant and facile, and his dexterity and swiftness of execution with the brush were remarkable, especially in rendering the skins and furs of animals; a few touches or twirls, especially in his later work, sufficed to produce effects which seem due to the most intricate manipulation.

ANONYMOUS

'LONDON QUARTERLY REVIEW' 1874

THE line that divides Landseer's art from that of other animal-painters also separates his own pictures into two distinct classes. On one side of that line are his portraits of individual beasts, compositions in which one or more of them are appropriately set, sometimes telling the story of their juxtaposition, sometimes merely setting forth a claim to existence as representations of things in themselves beautifully or gracefully arranged, or as pieces of fine workmanship. On the other side of the line are the pictures into which the artist has thrown a peculiar and subtle charm, educing from his materials not a direct moral lesson as Hogarth would have done, but a power of awakening thought and feeling in others—pictures now idyllic with all the simple happiness in mere living of the brute inhabitants of the field; now epic with their strifes and struggles; now dramatic with the play of their strange minds, so mysteriously like and unlike our own; now lyric with their joys and griefs—pictures, in short, which, as Ruskin has said, are poems. It is in these works in which the poetry of animal life is strikingly embodied that Landseer's originality is shown.

The older masters seldom introduced animals as a principal element in their pictures. When Veronese, Velasquez, or Van Dyck gives us a dog or a horse it is rather as an adjunct in a sumptuous scene, or as a characteristic possession of the person whose portrait he is executing, than as a thing particularly interesting in itself. Rubens, it is true, gives a more prominent place to beasts, and, attracted apparently by the savage energy of the subject, revels in an occasional lion hunt. Snyders, his friend and pupil, dwells habitually on the sterner aspects of the chase. The later cattle painters—Cuypp, who steeped his meadow scenes in golden sunlight, and the sturdier Paul Potter—are animal-painters entirely after the modern kind. We can trace their echoes

in contemporary art, but even in them there is no sign of controlling feeling or sentiment. Perhaps of all the ancients Dürer studied the subject in a spirit most akin to that of Landseer. His dogs and pigs and horses have an individual life, a distinct character of their own. One feels that to him one beast was not as another beast—a patch of necessary color, a superior kind of stage property—but a creature into whose mind it was worth while, if possible, to enter.

Among modern animal-painters, too, Landseer holds a distinct place. The agricultural scenes of Troyon and Rosa Bonheur possess extraordinary vigor, and their cattle, horses, and sheep are certainly executed with more rough power and less civilized refinement than Landseer was in the habit of showing; but in none of the modern animal-painters is there Landseer's vein of poetry; not one has seen so far into the brute nature, and passed by so entire a transmigration into the beast's soul, into its limited blind feeling and its groping rudimentary reasonings. . . .

Nearly allied to this power of rendering what may be called the psychology of beasthood was Landseer's singular skill in the drawing of animal forms. He caught the most fleeting and most characteristic attitudes of his models with a kind of instinct. Doubtless this power had been greatly increased by years of toil, but though he strengthened the gift that was in him by assiduous study, yet the gift itself was something peculiarly his own—and what a wonderful gift it was! How admirably his brush seems to give life to these countless creatures—how various they are, and each how full of character! . . .

Landseer's shortcomings are not far to seek. His color, except when working at his best, is poor, his composition not excellent; but his humor and pathos are admirable, his technical painting of certain substances not less so, and in power of drawing and painting animal life, of expressing insight into animal character and sympathy with animal feeling and in the divine faculty of casting a halo of poetry over his subject—in these he has never been surpassed.

The Works of Landseer

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PLATES

'THE OLD SHEPHERD'S CHIEF MOURNER'

PLATE I

THIS picture, one of the most celebrated of Landseer's works, and by many considered his masterpiece, was painted in 1837, when the artist was thirty-five years old, and exhibited that same year at the Royal Academy. It is now in the South Kensington Museum, London. It represents the interior of a Highland cottage of which the only living inmate is the faithful dog watching beside the coffin in which his master lies. The shepherd's plaid partly covers the coffin's lid, upon which some hand has placed a sprig of rosemary in accordance with an old custom still held sacred in the lonely hill-

country of Scotland. The Bible and spectacles of the dead shepherd lie on a stool near by; his stick and hat are on the floor; and beside the window, which lets in a flood of light, stands the worn armchair where he used to sit.

Ruskin called this painting "one of the most perfect poems or pictures which modern times have seen," and in his poetic but not very accurate description of the work says, "The exquisite execution of the glossy and crisp hair of the dog, the bright sharp touching of the green bough beside it, the clear painting of the wood of the coffin and the folds of the blanket, are language—language clear and expressive in the highest degree. But the close pressure of the dog's breast against the wood, the convulsive clinging of the paws, which has dragged the blanket off the trestle, the total powerlessness of the head laid, close and motionless, upon its folds, the fixed and tearful fall of the eye in its utter hopelessness, the rigidity of repose which marks that there has been no motion nor change in the trance of agony since the last blow was struck on the coffin-lid, the quietness and gloom of the chamber, the spectacles marking the place where the Bible was last closed, indicating how lonely has been the life, how unwatched the departure of him who is now laid solitary in his sleep—these are all thoughts—thoughts by which the picture is separated at once from hundreds of equal merit, as far as mere painting goes, by which it ranks as a work of high art, and stamps its author, not as the neat imitator of the texture of a skin or the fold of a drapery, but as a man of mind."

The picture is on panel and measures one foot six inches high by two feet wide.

'SPANIELS OF KING CHARLES' BREED'

PLATE II

THIS picture, sometimes called 'The Cavalier's Pets,' was first exhibited at the British Institution in 1845. It is a remarkable example of Landseer's rapidity of workmanship, having been painted in two days—a fact that is the more to be wondered at when it is observed how exquisitely the ostrich feather in the cavalier's gray felt hat lying on the table is rendered, and with what a delicate touch the silky coats of the spaniels—the King Charles, black and tan with spots of white, and the Blenheim, white with reddish brown ears—are portrayed. Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse, indeed, considers that as a piece of painting Landseer never excelled this work.

The picture is on canvas and measures about two feet high by three feet wide. It hangs in the National Gallery, London.

'THE TWA DOGS'

PLATE III

THE Twa Dogs,' painted in 1822, when Landseer was twenty years old, illustrates Robert Burns' poem of that name which relates how

"Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time."

One of these dogs, Cæsar by name, the well-cared-for favorite of a wealthy and high-born master, was a Newfoundland, whose

. . . "lockèd, letter'd, braw brass collar
Show'd him the gentleman and scholar."

The other, Luath, was a ploughman's collie, whose

. . . "honest, sonsie, baws'nt face
Aye gat him friends in ilka place."

In spite of the difference in their social positions and worldly circumstances, the two were fast friends, and on the occasion in question, having sought a secluded spot, they seated themselves upon a knoll,

"An' there began a lang digression
About the lords o' the creation."

Their conversation, in which they compared their lots and discussed the hardships of poverty versus the emptiness and folly of a fashionable life, lasted until the sun had set and night was upon them,

"When up they gat, and shook their lugs,
Rejoic'd they were na men, but dogs;
An' each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day."

Landseer has caught the spirit of the poem, and while admirably interpreting the character of the two dogs, has by no means divested them of their canine natures.

The picture is on canvas and measures about one foot four inches high by nearly two feet wide. It is in the South Kensington Museum, London.

‘THE SICK MONKEY’

PLATE IV

AMONG Landseer's last works 'The Sick Monkey,' or, as it was originally called, 'Doctor's Visit to Poor Relations at the Zoölogical Gardens,' occupies a prominent place, and offers an admirable example of the kind of subject of which Landseer was the originator and in the portrayal of which he was præminent.

In a cage at the London Zoölogical Gardens a young monkey, sick and suffering, is tenderly cared for by its mother, to whom it clings with all the dependence of an ailing child. On a rail behind sits the "doctor," quietly devouring an orange, while he holds another in his hind paws. The soft gray fur of the mother and child and the coat of the doctor, its black offset by the two bright spots of color supplied by the oranges, are excellently painted, as are also the forms and attitudes of the animals, and their almost human expressions indicative of suffering in the baby-monkey's face, anxious solicitude in the mother's, and calm indifference on the part of the "doctor."

The picture is on canvas and measures three feet high by two feet three inches wide. It was painted in 1870 and was exhibited in that year at the

Royal Academy, London. In 1876 it was sent to the United States, where it was seen at the Centennial Exhibition held in Philadelphia. It is now the property of Lord Northbrook.

‘THE MONARCH OF THE GLEN’

PLATE V

THIS picture, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1851, was painted in accordance with an order received by Landseer from the Commissioners on the Fine Arts to paint three subjects connected with the chase, for the peers’ refreshment room in the English Houses of Parliament. The matter, however, came to nothing, for the House of Commons took offense at not having been consulted in the transaction, and the appropriation bill failed to carry. ‘The Monarch of the Glen,’ one of Landseer’s finest and most popular works, then passed into private possession. Since that time it has more than once changed owners, and is now the property of T. J. Barratt, Esq., London.

“The picture,” writes Mr. McDougall Scott, “is eminently simple and majestic in its composition. A noble animal is represented before the merest suggestion of mountain scenery, which, despite its small relation to the proportion of the stag, is full of space and distance. The set of the head and neck of the ‘Monarch’ as he stands in tense expectancy is the essence of proud power and freedom.”

The name by which the picture is known was not conferred upon it by Landseer, who gave it no title beyond what might be deduced from the following lines from the ‘Legends of Glenorchay’ which he appended to the painting:

“When first the day star’s clear, cool light,
 Chasing night’s shadows gray,
 With silver touch’d each rocky height
 That girdled wild Glen-Strae,
 Uprose the Monarch of the Glen,
 Majestic from his lair;
 Survey’d the scene with piercing ken,
 And snuff’d the fragrant air.”

‘A HIGHLAND BREAKFAST’

PLATE VI

ALTHOUGH Landseer was never so successful in compositions into which many figures were introduced as he was in his portrayals of single animals, the ‘Highland Breakfast’ is a fine and characteristic example of his story-telling pictures which met with popular favor and added greatly to his reputation.

The scene of this painting is a Highland shepherd’s hut, where a number of dogs—staghound, collie, and terriers—are gathered around a tub of hot milk assigned them for their morning meal. Some of them hang back, for the breakfast is yet too hot; others, unable to restrain their impatience, eagerly

dip their noses into the tempting milk. Seated near by is the shepherd's wife, heedful only of the baby in her arms. A cradle, a chair, and some cooking utensils lying about complete this picture of lowly life.

The painting is on wood and measures one foot eight inches high by two feet two inches wide. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1834, and is now in the South Kensington Museum, London.

‘LOW LIFE—HIGH LIFE’

PLATE VII

THESE companion pictures, now in the National Gallery of British Art (Tate Gallery), London, were painted in 1829 and exhibited two years later at the British Institution. One of them represents a butcher's bulldog, “big of jowl and broad of paw,” lazily blinking in the warm sunshine, as he sits beside his master's block, guarding the hat, boots, and cans that have been left in his care. “Was ever anything more real—was ever anything more expressive?” asks a writer in the ‘Morning Chronicle.’ “This dog is the very essence of greasy vulgarity and yet he is a dog, every inch and every hair of him. His eyes, half shut and winking, are ‘low’—his tongue, lazily curling out of his greasy chops, is ‘low’—his clumsy knotted legs are ‘low’—his ungainly inturned toes are ‘low,’ and beside him stands a pair of boots, stubborn, squat, coarse boots, irredeemably and hopelessly ‘low.’ The whole picture, in fact, dog and accessories, presents the most perfect idea of low comfort and ungainly free-and-easyism that ever was put on canvas.”

The other picture, ‘High Life,’ offers a striking contrast in the condition of the dog which gives the title to the scene. Gentle and “gentlemanly” is the staghound seated before the fire in the comfortable study of the master whose books, gloves, and other belongings bespeak his rank in life. It has been said that this dog was Sir Walter Scott's famous “Maida,” but there is insufficient ground for this belief.

Both ‘Low Life’ and ‘High Life’ are fine examples of Landseer's art. They are painted on wood, and each one measures only eighteen inches high by about thirteen inches wide.

‘SUSPENSE’

PLATE VIII

THE year 1834 was productive of several of Landseer's masterpieces, of which his biographer, Mr. F. G. Stephens, considers ‘Suspense’ “by far the best picture, the aptest illustration of his genius, the one on which his honor should rest.”

The picture is an example of that class of Landseer's works in which “the invention of the artist is exerted rather to exercise and call forth the imagination of the spectator than to display his own.” It represents a huge bloodhound intently watching at a closed door, shut out, we are led to suppose, from his master, who has been borne wounded into the room beyond. In the original painting drops of blood may be seen upon the floor, telling the story

of desperate strife, to which the blood-stained eagle plume also bears witness. The steel gauntlets on the table, reflecting the light in their polished surfaces, add an effective touch to the picture.

'Suspense' is now in the South Kensington Museum, London. It is painted on wood and measures about two feet three inches high by three feet wide.

'A JACK IN OFFICE'

PLATE IX

'A JACK in Office' is one of Landseer's best known works, and the first of those "canine burlesques of human life" that won for him an almost unparalleled popularity. This picture gives evidence of both the humor and the pathsos of the painter. An itinerant dealer in dog's meat—a familiar figure in London fifty years ago—has left his wheelbarrow in a side street under the guardianship of a fat mongrel cur, who, mounted on the top of his charge, does not deign in all the arrogance of his position of authority to so much as glance at the poor miserable dogs who, attracted by the smell of the food, have ventured to approach. A lean and hungry hound gazes longingly on the savory contents of the butcher's basket placed near the barrel; a puppy in front, having devoured some scraps of meat that were cast aside, still gnaws the skewer and makes bold to ask for more; in the background other wretched creatures timidly draw near, none daring, however, to touch the meat that "Jack" so superciliously guards.

The picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1833. It is on wood and measures about one foot and a half high by a trifle over two feet wide. It is now in the South Kensington Museum, London.

'THE HUNTED STAG'

PLATE X

AFTER Landseer's visit to Scotland in 1824 the deer became almost as frequent a subject for his brush as the dog. "The deer," writes Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse, "was the only animal of which he may be said to have made a special study in its wild state, and whose natural life he watched with never wearying care and pleasure. The beauty of its form, the nobility and grace of its bearing, the cleverness of its instincts, and its courage in extremity, together with the sublimity of its home, gave it a fascination from which Landseer never escaped. . . . He may be said to have mastered other animals, but the deer mastered him."

Moreover, the wild scenery of the Scottish Highlands made a strong appeal to Landseer's imagination, and many were the studies that he made of mountain, lake, and rushing torrent, and the ever changing effects of cloud and mist. Scenery such as this he painted as fit settings for his numerous pictures of the stag and deer, many of them tragic in their portrayals of the death of these creatures, and none more touching and at the same time more stirring than the one reproduced in plate x, in which a hunted stag, hotly pursued by the hounds, has plunged into a mountain stream to escape its bloodthirsty foes, and is borne down the rocky torrent, even there closely followed by its tormentors.

The picture, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1833, is now in the National Gallery of British Art (Tate Gallery), London. It is on wood and measures about two feet three inches high by three feet wide.

A LIST OF SOME OF THE MORE NOTABLE PAINTINGS BY LANDSEER
WITH THEIR PRESENT LOCATIONS

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

ENGLAND. EGHAM, HOLLOWAY COLLEGE: Man Proposes, God Disposes—LONDON, BURLINGTON HOUSE, DIPLOMA GALLERY: The Faithful Hound—LONDON, NATIONAL GALLERY: Sleeping Bloodhound; Spaniels of King Charles' Breed (Plate II); Dignity and Impudence; Shoeing; Two Studies of a Lion; Defeat of Comus (loaned)—LONDON, NATIONAL GALLERY OF BRITISH ART: Low Life—High Life (Plate VII); Highland Music; The Hunted Stag (Plate X); Peace; War; Highland Dogs; Alexander and Diogenes; The Maid and the Magpie; A Distinguished Member of the Humane Society; Scene at Abbotsford; Uncle Tom and his Wife for Sale; Donkey and Foal; Portrait of John Landseer; Equestrian Portrait (finished by Millais)—LONDON, NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY: Portrait of Sir Walter Scott; Portrait of Dr. John Allen—LONDON, SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM: Highland Breakfast (Plate VI); Drover's Departure; Dog and Shadow; The Twa Dogs (Plate III); Fireside Party; The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner (Plate I); A Jack in Office (Plate IX); Tethered Rams; Sancho Panza and Dapple; The Angler's Guard; A Naughty Child; Suspense (Plate VIII); Comical Dogs; Young Roebuck and Rough Hounds; Eagle's Nest; There's no Place Like Home; Lion; The Stonebreaker and his Daughter; Lady Blessington's Dog; Sketch in the Highlands—LONDON, WALLACE COLLECTION: Highland Scene; Arab Tent; Looking for Crumbs that Fall from the Rich Man's Table—IRELAND. DUBLIN, NATIONAL GALLERY OF IRELAND: Dialogue at Waterloo; Portrait Group (unfinished)—SCOTLAND. EDINBURGH, NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND: Rent Day in the Wilderness.

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

ENGLAND. OWNED BY THE KING OF ENGLAND: The Connoisseurs (Page 190); The Sanctuary; Van Amburgh and his Animals; Marmosets; Portrait of Queen Victoria; Queen Victoria and Prince Albert; Queen Victoria in Fancy Dress; Queen Victoria in the Highlands; Queen Victoria Sketching; Queen Victoria at Osborne House; Windsor Castle; The Princess Royal; Princess Victoria of Saxe Coburg; Princess Alice when a Baby; Princess Alice with Eos; Dash; Pen, Brush, and Chisel; Dash, Hector, Nero, and Lorie; Islay, Macaw, and Love-birds; Lorie; Lion-dog from Malta; Islay Begging; Cairnach; Eos; A Drive of Deer; The Free Kirk; Däckel; Hunter and Bloodhound; Highland Lassie Crossing the Stream; The Mountain Top; Dandie Dinmont and the Hedgehog; Dear Old Boz; Indian Tent, Mare, and Foal; Defeat of Comus (fresco); The Font—OWNED BY LORD ASHBURTON: Portrait of Lord Ashburton—OWNED BY T. J. BARRATT, ESQ: The Monarch of the Glen (Plate V)—OWNED BY THE DUKE OF BEDFORD: Chevy Chase—OWNED BY EARL BROWNLOW: Midsummer Night's Dream—OWNED BY LORD CHEYLES-MORE: The Auld Wife; Flood in the Highlands; Equestrian Portrait of Queen Victoria—OWNED BY THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE: Bolton Abbey in the Olden Time; Laying Down the Law; The Chieftain's Friends—OWNED BY THE EARL OF ESSEX: The Cat's-paw—OWNED BY LORD HARDINGE: Night; Morning; Deer at Bay—OWNED BY JOHN NAYLOR, ESQ: There's Life in the Old Dog Yet; Harvest in the Highlands; Dead Game—OWNED BY THE MARQUIS OF NORTHAMPTON: Swannery Invaded by Eagles—OWNED BY LORD NORTHBROOK: The Sick Monkey (Plate IV); The Traveled Monkey—OWNED BY THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND: Deerstalker's Return—OWNED BY THE DUKE OF SUTHERLAND: The Sutherland Children—OWNED BY THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON: Highland Whiskey Still; Van Amburgh and his Animals.

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A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL BOOKS AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES
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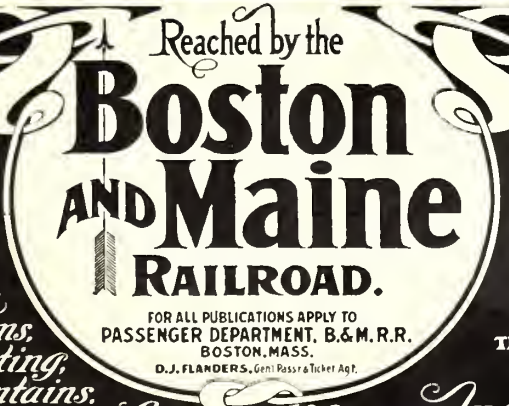
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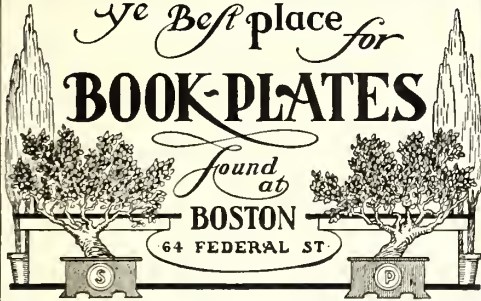
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