

*Pencil-Drawing from Nature*

PENCIL - DRAWING FROM NATURE. BY ALFRED EAST, A.R.A.

MORE than half the students of landscape painting want to canter before they can crawl; they want to use colour before they know anything beyond the merest elementary rules of drawing. They may be able to draw the outline of some object, and do something in the way of light and shade, but the knowledge of the construction of the things they paint is slight. Their trees are frequently flat silhouettes of paint, more or less right in tone, but seldom right in the expression of character. There is no modelling of their branches; their outlines may be as hard as the edge of a house and not sympathetic as a thing that lives or breathes. They miss altogether that subtlety of characterisation which makes them companions of man. Things which express the living, moving forces of nature are treated with as little regard to these predominant qualities as if they did not exist. I speak of trees particularly, because it is an accepted fact that they are very

difficult to paint. There is one thing certain—that the great artists of the past painted them differently because they appealed to them in a different way, according to the temperamental difference of the painter. But you must have noticed one thing—that they are all well drawn and well constructed; in some cases the treatment which may appear to you as slight, upon examination reveals a depth of knowledge which makes abbreviation possible.

You may ask what is the best way to acquire a knowledge of trees like Corot's or Turner's. The answer is, draw them with a pencil in your sketch-book, draw them often, and whenever you get the opportunity. You will find that it is not time thrown away, it will save you a good deal of trouble in the end, and, what is more, a good deal of worry, if you draw your trees in your sketch-book first of all, with a view to the composition of your picture. You may make many drawings for the composition and feel a little tired, but you may have by so doing avoided a hundred greater difficulties upon your canvas. There is nothing more annoying than to find that your picture would have



LANDSCAPE WITH CATILE

*(In Victoria and Albert Museum)*

BY CLAUDE

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