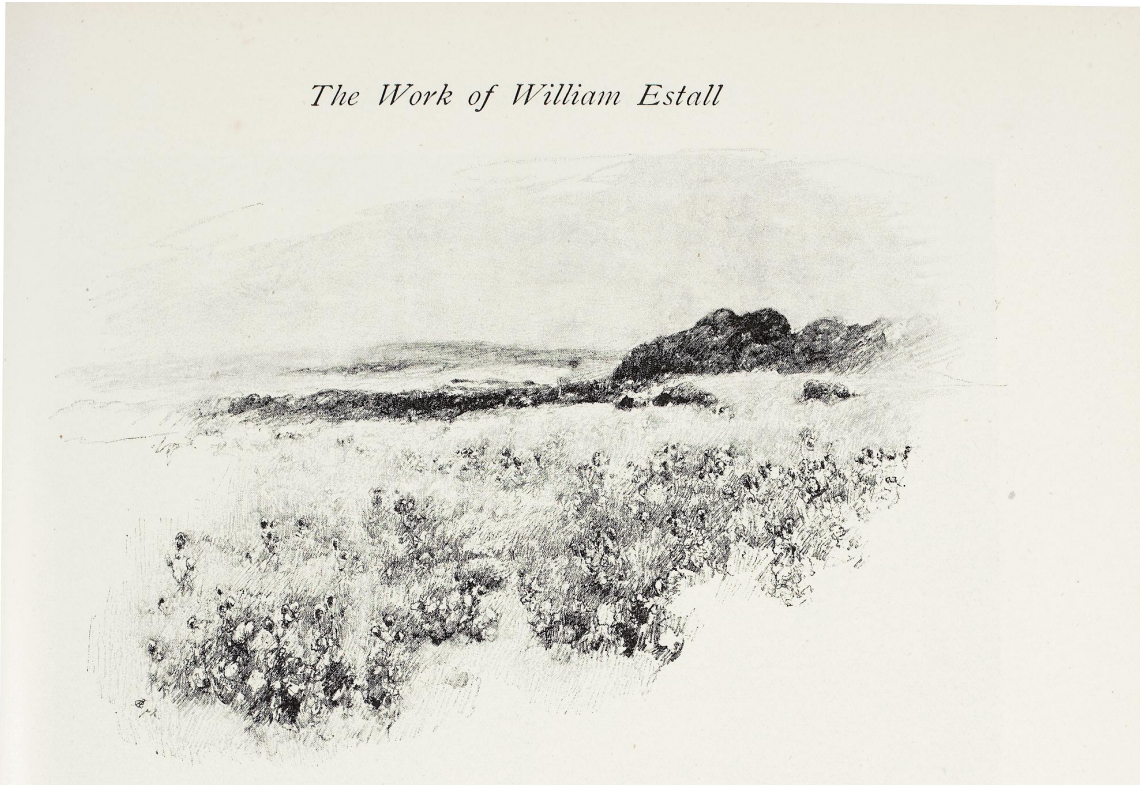


The Work of William Estall

STUDY IN LEAD PENCIL

BY WILLIAM ESTALL

THE WORK OF WILLIAM ESTALL. BY ARTHUR TOMSON.

No manner of subject has proved more attractive to both painters and their patrons than the delineation of country scenes. And this is natural, seeing that the observation of out-door life is one of the first keen pleasures of healthy youth; while in maturer years, and in old age, men, setting aside their ambitions and cares, seek again and again for that repose the country, and the country alone, can bring them.

It is not unnatural, too, that this strong love of the country should have contributed towards the production of many great artists. A feeling so genuine as this adoration of huge trees, of green nuances, and of the perpetually recurring spectacle of men sowing and reaping, or performing any other duty common to peasant life, must perforce bring with it so great an intimacy with these sights as to beget an altogether singular power of reproducing them pictorially—should the artist have skill enough for the occasion. A painter of pastorals therefore starts on his career already equipped up to a certain point; his subjects are well known to him; with them he commenced

to be impressed as soon, perhaps, as he began to walk. He has, too, this advantage, that there is no story he will tell in paint that is not known to every observing man; whatever poetry and individuality he may introduce into his picture, is certain sooner or later to meet with sympathetic eyes, so many are those who—without the gift of picturing it—have dwelt lovingly on the same spectacle as himself.

It is among the ranks of pastoral painters that a great number of those artists will be found who have, at the same time, had something to say for themselves, and have also had meted out to them some degree of recognition and worldly success. Not immediate success perhaps, but enough in the course of a lifetime to warrant such an artist, with a message of his own, stating it, and stating it as persistently as circumstances will enable him. Corot, notwithstanding that his landscapes were instinct with a more fastidious elegance than any man had ever dreamt of before him, passed a placid and careless old age. The story of Millet's life has lost much of its tragedy since its facts have become better known. Many of their contemporaries, whose artistic aims were similar, also knew the delights of fame: whilst our own Walker, Pinwell, Mason, Cecil Lawson,