

LITTLE FOLKS

Edwin Landseer, The Boy Artist

(*'The Child's Companion'*).

The designer of the noble lions which guard the Nelson monument in Trafalgar Square, London, was the youngest son of John Landseer, a well-known engraver.

When five years of age he drew animals correctly and powerfully. The wise father encouraged his little son's attempts, and frequently took him to Hampstead Heath to make studies of donkeys, sheep and goats.

Some of his early sketches and drawings, now in the South Kensington Museum, made when he was a child of eight, show how faithfully he reproduced nature. At the age of thirteen he exhibited two paintings at the Academy. At this time he was placed under the famous painter Haydon, and, by his advice, made a study of the Elgin marbles, then placed in Burlington House, but now in the British Museum.

Young Landseer was admitted as a student to the Royal Academy

In 1826 Landseer first visited the Highlands of Scotland, and from that time the subjects of his paintings were mainly chosen from the men, animals, and landscapes of that part of the country.

But dogs were always his favorite studies. It used to be the common practice to submit young dogs to the painful operation of cropping and cutting their ears 'to make them look sharp.' Sir Edwin set himself to stop that barbarous practice, by refusing to act as umpire at dog shows where cropped dogs were exhibited; and mainly owing to his writings the public mind became convinced of its cruelty.

Once during a prosecution at a London police-court, Sir Edwin entered the court and took a seat at the table. He listened earnestly and patiently until the defending solicitor stated that 'the Queen's dogs had been cropped,' when he arose and indignantly denied the libel, and said, 'Her Majesty protests against cropping, and never had a dog's ears cropped in her life.'

He gave good evidence against the offence, and had the pleasure of hearing the magistrate condemn the practice as 'a barbarous relic of a barbarous age,' and of seeing the offender convicted.

In later life, at a meeting of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, he said:—

'One of the proudest moments of my life was when I was once riding down Regent Street. There was a man with two little puppies, one under each arm. He looked at me and winked, and said, "Here's some nice dogs." I said, "Yes, they are not bad-looking animals." He said, "I tell you what it is—you can't match them." I said, "I see they are not cropped." He replied, "Oh, Landseer says they ought not to be cropped." I do not know how it was, but I was exceedingly flattered by this, and felt that I had done something for the cause.'

In 1850 Landseer received the honor of knighthood from Her Majesty.

He died on the 1st of October, 1873, and was buried in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral.



SIR EDWIN LANDSEER DRAWING THE OLD LION AT THE ZOO.

His deep sympathy with animal life was no doubt born with him. When eight years of age his sketches of animals attracted the notice and commendation of many eminent men of the day, amongst others that of Fuseli, the keeper of the Royal Academy, who familiarly called him 'his little dog boy.'

when fourteen years of age, and this proved a great incentive to the industrious lad, and his progress became more rapid. His pictures were bought by many noblemen. The Queen and Prince Albert were amongst the warmest admirers of his charming paintings, and purchased many of them.