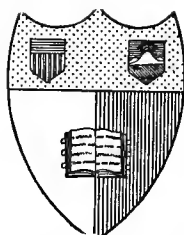


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DRAWINGS OF GAINSBOROUGH





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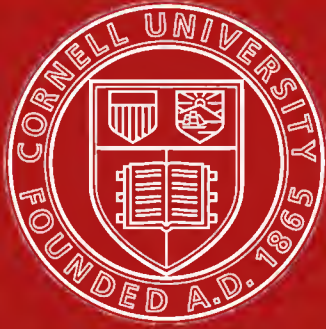
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Drawings of Gainsborough.



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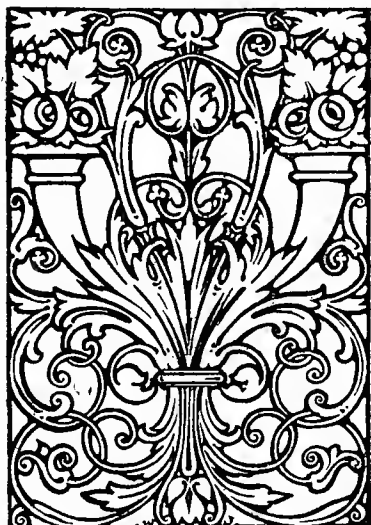
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DRAWINGS OF GAINSBOROUGH

DRAWINGS OF THE



GREAT MASTERS



DRAWINGS OF GAINSBOROUGH



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THE DRAWINGS OF GAINSBOROUGH BY LORD RONALD SUTHERLAND GOWER



WE know from Fulcher's life of Gainsborough that he loved to pass his evenings in sketching scenes from memory, while some one, a daughter or a musical friend, would play to him, and thus he passed most of his evenings in Bath or in London.

Unlike his great compeer, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough cared but little for general society, and seldom went abroad in the evening. Nor was Gainsborough a clubable man; although not shy and distant like Romney, he infinitely preferred his evenings at home to any other mode of passing his time after his sitters had left his studio, which they did after two or three o'clock; his work was then finished as far as his profession was concerned, but Gainsborough was never a moment idle, and after the dinner, which took place in those days not later than five or six o'clock, Gainsborough would draw up his chair to his wife's side, and while music was being played in the room, he would take out his sketch-book and his brushes, his crayons and his water-colours, and sketch away all the evening, and when one sketch or study was finished, toss it under the table, and commence another until there was quite a little picture gallery on the floor. At the end of the evening he would put aside what he considered the best worth keeping, and would have destroyed the others, had not his wife, like Mrs. Gilpin, possessed a frugal mind, and gathered together those which her husband rejected.

Among the two score of studies which, by the kindness of the Keeper of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, we are able to study in this volume, are some which can be identified as the first ideas or studies of a few of the artist's well-known works—the lovely sketch in black and white chalk is probably taken from life of that peerless Georgiana of Devonshire; as Gainsborough watched her walking through the glades of Chiswick—and the little sketch of the boy in cavalier costume is the embryo of one of the finest portraits

THE DRAWINGS OF GAINSBOROUGH

in the world, the *Blue Boy*, the finest of the Grosvenor House Gallery.

Unlike Reynolds, Gainsborough made studies preliminary to his paintings in oils of his sitters, and for his matchless landscapes, and in many of his groups in these sketches of cottage children and peasants one can discern the first inspiration he had of such paintings as that of the *Hay Wain*, one of the glories of our English School in the National Gallery ; of the *Cottage Door* at Grosvenor House ; and of those two beautiful landscapes with figures at Belvoir Castle.

No artist of any period left so many drawings and studies behind him as Gainsborough did—there are thousands of them scattered in many public and private collections ; and I know of many an old country house in which studies by Gainsborough are allowed to hang in obscurity in the bedrooms—it is to be hoped that this publication, by giving more publicity than has hitherto been done of our great master's works, may induce owners of these treasures to do more honour to their possessions.

A contemporary writing of the manner in which Gainsborough worked on these sketches, writes : “Many of these studies were in black and white, while colours were applied in the following manner : a small bit of sponge, tied to a bit of stick, served as a pencil for the shadows, and a small lump of whiting, held by a pair of tea-tongs, was the instrument by which the high lights were applied.” Regarding this latter manner of painting, one of his lady friends called it Gainsborough's “mopping.”

Both the painters, Jackson and Lawrence, valued Gainsborough's drawings very highly, and the former wrote : “I must have seen at least a thousand, not one of which but possesses merit, and some in a transcendent degree.” And Lawrence wrote below a sketch by Gainsborough of William Pitt, “Unique and inestimable.”

His studies from life were drawn or painted with marvellous rapidity—the fine head in oils of the artist's nephew, as fine an oil sketch as any Vandyck or Rubens ever painted, was finished in an hour.

Gainsborough, who was lavish to a fault, never sold his sketches, but gladly gave them away to his friends ; and sometimes with unfortunate results, for one of his friends, a lady, thought well to decorate the walls of a room with these incomparable drawings and coolly varnished the series after they had been pasted on the walls. The predominance of landscape in Gainsborough's studies proves how much he preferred that branch of the art to portrait-painting, and for one study of a figure there are ten of a scene on the banks of

THE DRAWINGS OF GAINSBOROUGH

the Orwell or the Stour ; and not a picturesque spot in the neighbourhood of Sudbury did he not sketch from nature, and reproduce afterwards from memory. There is but one great modern artist who has left behind such delightful paintings and sketches as Gainsborough—the great French landscape painter, Corot.

In some of Gainsborough's figure-studies we are reminded of another great French painter, Watteau. Gainsborough, indeed, may be said to combine the talents of both these great Frenchmen ; and although his subjects were generally of a cheerful character, now and again one is reminded in some of his landscape studies of another great Frenchman, Jean François Millet.

Gainsborough, according to Jackson, sketched in clay as well as with colours and chalk. " He made little laymen for human figures, he modelled his horses and cows, and knobs of coal sat for rocks—nay, he carried this so far," adds Jackson, " that he never chose to paint anything from invention when he could have the objects themselves. The limbs of trees, which he collected, would have made no inconsiderable woodrick, and many an ass has been led into his painting-room."

After leaving Bath and settling in Pall Mall, Gainsborough had few opportunities for painting his landscapes out of doors. But even in London he would continue to sketch from nature, and many a summer's day would he pass at Richmond, where he found as fine a scene for his pencil as any in England. It was while sketching at Richmond that he met the handsome lad, Jack Hill, who figures in so many of his rural paintings ; and when he came across any good-looking gypsy maiden, or cottage child, he would at once make a drawing from life.

Anything, however mechanical, which gave a new reading to his beloved art of painting deeply interested Gainsborough ; and there is now to be seen in an art emporium in Bond Street a quantity of sketches in oils on glass painted by him ; these painted glasses are movable, and on them are painted landscapes, sea views, and moonlight scenes ; these were placed in a frame, and lighted at the back of the frame, which is open, with candles, and although the machine is somewhat disjointed, and not the better for being a century and a half old, it still gives one a vivid idea of the charm and chiaroscuro these paintings on glass once possessed.

NOTES UPON THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH'S DRAWINGS

FRONTISPIECE: The original sketch for Gainsborough's famous portrait of Georgiana or Elizabeth Duchess of Devonshire. This beautiful chalk drawing was formerly at Warwick Castle, and was sold at Christie's in 1897 for a moderate sum. Nothing can exceed the charm and grace of this work; it is far superior to the re-painted full length life-size portrait of which this is a study. And here we have the first idea and the inspiration of what (were it not for the hands of the restorers or destroyers) will be one of the artist's greatest works. Black and white crayon, on tint. Size, $19 \times 12\frac{3}{4}$.

PLATE.

1. This rough sketch of a girl carrying a basket is probably one of the artist's daughters; it resembles his portrait of his two daughters now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Drawn in pencil. Size, $7\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{5}{8}$.
2. One of the most delightful sketches, among so many delightful ones in the great collection of Gainsborough's drawings in the British Museum. Drawn in sepia and black chalk, and slightly tinted in water colour. Size, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 7$.
3. Study of a cow. Size, $7\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$.
4. Sketch for a lady's portrait. I believe this to be one of the artist's daughters, whom he loved to paint. Drawn in pencil. Size, $14\frac{1}{8} \times 8\frac{5}{8}$.
5. A group of cottage children, such as Gainsborough loved to introduce into his landscapes. Although a rough sketch it has the indefinable charm that the artist alone knew how to give to such sitters. The perfect ease and unstudied attitude of these little people gives such a sketch the value of an undying work of art. It is slightly coloured. Size, $15\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{3}{4}$.
6. New fallen snow. Drawn in pencil, with a grey tint. Size, $7\frac{3}{4} \times 6$.
7. Wayfarers jogging home. In sepia wash, and black crayon. Size, $10\frac{3}{8} \times 7\frac{5}{8}$.
8. These four little sketches, drawn in pencil, with white on blue paper, are taken from the artist's sketch-book; and of these we can be sure that they were drawn from nature, and not, like so many of the painter's sketches, made at home, while spending the evening listening to his friends playing on the violin or harpsicord. They are lovely little vignettes, little gems of perfect beauty. Sizes about $3\frac{1}{4}$ wide.

NOTES UPON THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH'S DRAWINGS

9. This clever woodland scene has suffered from some dauber painting on the trees. In pencil, with Indian ink, on a tinted ground. Size, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{8}$.
10. Sketch of a lady. One regrets this attractive idea was never carried out in an oil painting. The pose is charming, and the little feet of the fair dame give a delightfully attractive air to the composition.
11. Gainsborough sketching from nature. This must, to judge by the youthful looks of the artist, have been an early drawing. He is gazing into a mirror, which he holds with his left hand; his sketch-book lies open on his lap. In pencil, on a yellowish ground. Size, $7\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$.
12. Sketch in sepia and black crayon of a valley, probably in the neighbourhood of Ipswich. Size, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8$.
13. This is a masterful sketch, almost a painting, in oils. Possibly done from nature by Gainsborough. The scene is taken probably from the coast opposite Harwich, not far distant from Ipswich, and dates to the years when young Gainsborough frequented Philip Thickness, the Lieutenant-Governor of Landguard Fort. Size, $12 \times 8\frac{5}{8}$.
14. A scene for "Love in a Cottage." Drawn in pencil, on a slightly yellow-tinted paper. Size, $7\frac{5}{8} \times 6$.
15. A Suffolk yeoman—a sketch from life. Pencil (stained). Size, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{5}{8}$.
16. Landscape with village in distance; market waggon and two figures. Charcoal on blue paper, heightened with white. Size $10\frac{1}{8} \times 13\frac{1}{8}$.
17. A very interesting study for the delightful picture at Buckingham Palace representing the Duke of Cumberland (brother of George III.), with his wife, who was the beautiful Anne Luttrell and the widow of Mr. Horton. Her marriage to the king's brother was the cause for the Royal Marriage Act. The little royal Duke, with his stately wife, who overtowers him by half a head, are seen walking in Kensington Gardens; the Duchess's sister Elizabeth is dimly portrayed on the right. Black and white crayons, on a tinted (sepia) ground. Size, $17 \times 12\frac{1}{2}$.
18. This drawing of cows in a meadow recalls some of Albert Cuyp's cattle paintings. In black, slightly washed with blue and yellow in water colour, and has been varnished.
19. A slight sketch from nature. Notice the nature of the palings to the left of foreground. Pencil. Size, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$.
20. A charming sketch of a delightful scene—the return of two peasants along a wooded path, as the evening closes in. Drawn in crayon, and lightly washed with sepia. Size, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8$.
21. A delightfully breezy study of, probably, a Suffolk landscape. Sketched in oils, in three colours, black, yellow, and white. Size, $12\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$.

NOTES UPON THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH'S DRAWINGS

22. A pencil study, evidently from nature. Size, $7\frac{1}{4} \times 6$.
23. A masterly sketch in black crayon, and slightly washed. A beautiful world scene, such as only Gainsborough could render in a few touches. Size, $12\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$.
24. A fine study of rocks among a thicket of trees. Gainsborough painted a large landscape in oils—formerly at Trentham—of which this is probably the study. Size, 13×9 .
25. Study for portrait of a lady. Half-length figure of a lady with high coiffure and cap, seated toward the right and leaning upon a table; her arms crossed. The face in three-quarters, eyes full. Size $12\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$.
26. I think this is a sketch of one of Gainsborough's daughters. In pencil. Size, $14 \times 8\frac{1}{2}$.
27. Landscape with a church. A hollow road winding from the foreground to the right, with high tree-crowned banks, right and left between which is a view of a church with square tower, and hills in the distance. At the bend of the road are figures of two people and a cow. Black chalk on grey paper, heightened with white. Size $10\frac{3}{8} \times 14\frac{1}{8}$.
28. One of the artist's most delightful studies. This unknown lady has all the grace of movement and refinement of one of Watteau's creations. One longs to know this fair bearer of a rose, but no portrait or painting at all resembling this study is known from the artist's brush. In black and white crayon on a faintly greenish coloured paper. Size, $18\frac{3}{8} \times 13$.
29. Landscape with rustic figures, horses and waggons and boy on donkey. Water colour. Size, $9\frac{1}{8} \times 12\frac{1}{4}$.
30. Sketch of a lady in a reverie; or is she asleep? Drawn in pencil. Size, $17\frac{1}{2} \times 10$.
31. A sketch (from nature) of a sandy knoll. Pencil, on tinted paper. Size, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{8}$.
32. A musical party. How gladly would we learn who the performers in this quartette were! In red chalk, on ordinary drawing paper. Size, $12\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$.
33. Captain of a sailing vessel of Amsterdam. Chalk drawing.
34. A very beautiful and carefully studied drawing of sky, trees, and dock leaves in the foreground. Drawn in pencil, on a yellowish tint. Size, $7\frac{1}{8} \times 6$.
35. This is probably the first idea of Gainsborough's celebrated "Blue Boy"—young Buttal of Bath. The boy's head, and even the lock of hair falling on his forehead, recalls that work; and the attitude of the arm holding the hat is the same as in the former picture at Grosvenor House. Sketched in water colour. Size, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$.

NOTES UPON THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH'S DRAWINGS

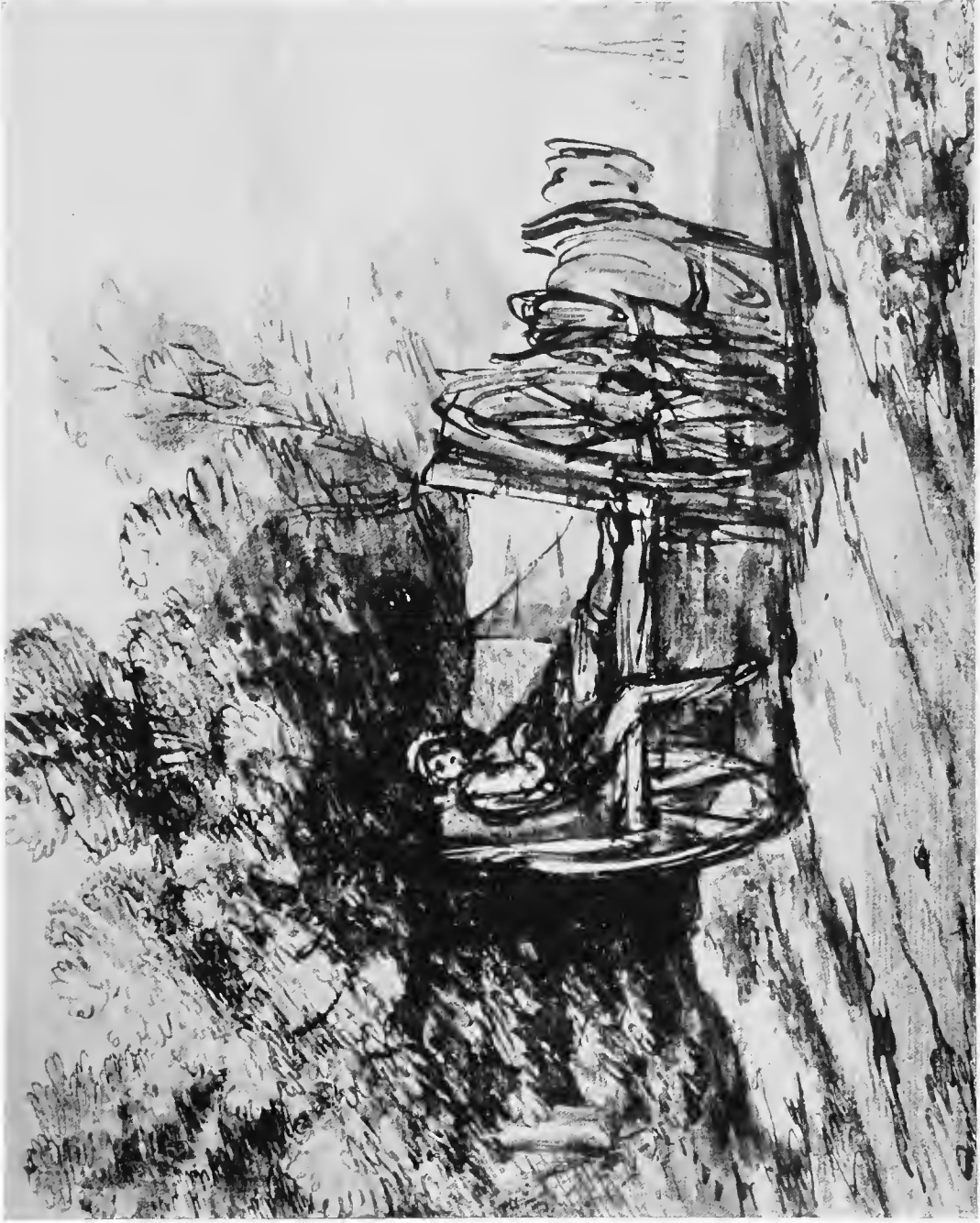
36. A sketch from nature, probably of some spot near Ipswich; or this drawing is evidently an early study by the Suffolk artist. In pencil. Size, $7\frac{5}{8} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$.
37. This sketch for Gainsborough's portrait of Lady Clarges is one of two at the British Museum, and is one of the half-dozen sketches from that and some private collections reproduced in Sir W. Armstrong's ponderous *Life of the artist*. In the sketch before us Gainsborough has introduced his favourite Pomeranian, who appears frequently in his pictures, in the superb portrait of Mrs. Robinson at Hertford House, and in that of the musician, Charles F. Abel. Black and white crayon, on tinted paper. Size, $12\frac{1}{2} \times 10$.
38. A sketch from nature. Drawn in pencil on a yellowish ground. Size, $7\frac{5}{8} \times 6$.
39. A perfect study of forest scenery, and shows us Gainsborough at his best. It is an idyll of England, and, were all the other studies by this artist to perish, would in itself prove the greatness of the painter. In water colour, slightly tinted in red.
40. A lovely sketch of trees and sky. Pencil. Size, $7\frac{5}{8} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$.
41. An elaborate study from nature of a tree. Delicately tinted in water colour of a brownish green. Size, $12\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{8}$.
42. A beautiful work, drawn in black and white crayon, and washed in the same colours. It has unfortunately been allowed to become much spotted, but even in its present state is among the best of this great artist's sylvan landscapes. Size, $12\frac{3}{8} \times 10\frac{1}{4}$.
43. This is a study either for Gainsborough's portrait of Lady Clarges, or perhaps for that delightful portrait of Lady Lincoln—a harpist, as well as Lady Clarges. This sketch is faintly drawn in pencil, touched up with white, on a rough orange-tinted paper. Size $14\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$.

R. S. G.

ILLUSTRATIONS



GIRL WITH A BASKET



THE ROAD TO THE VILLAGE



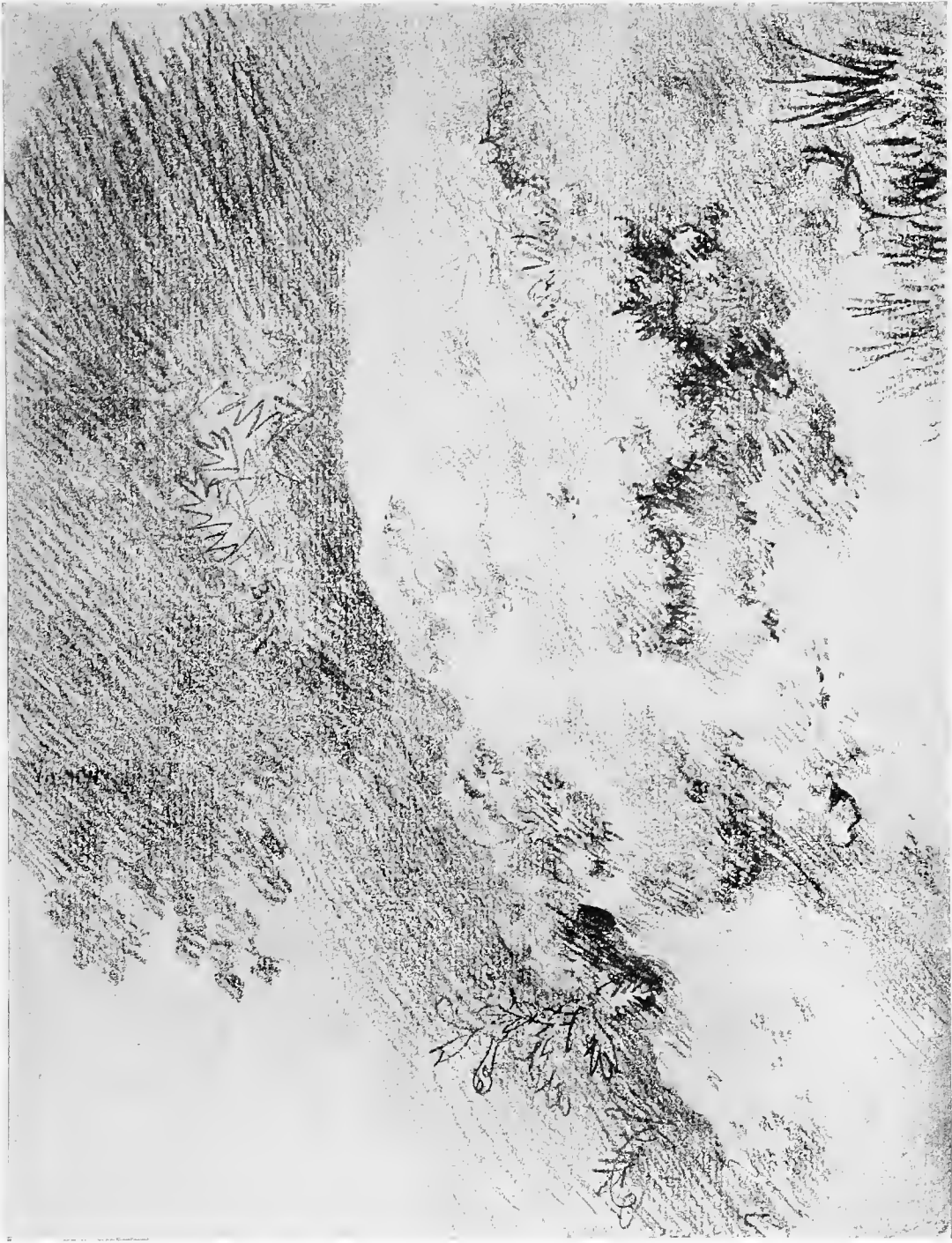
STUDY OF A COW



SKETCH FOR A LADY'S PORTRAIT



A GROUP OF COTTAGE CHILDREN



NEW FALLEN SNOW



WAYFARERS JOGGING HOME



LANDSCAPE STUDIES





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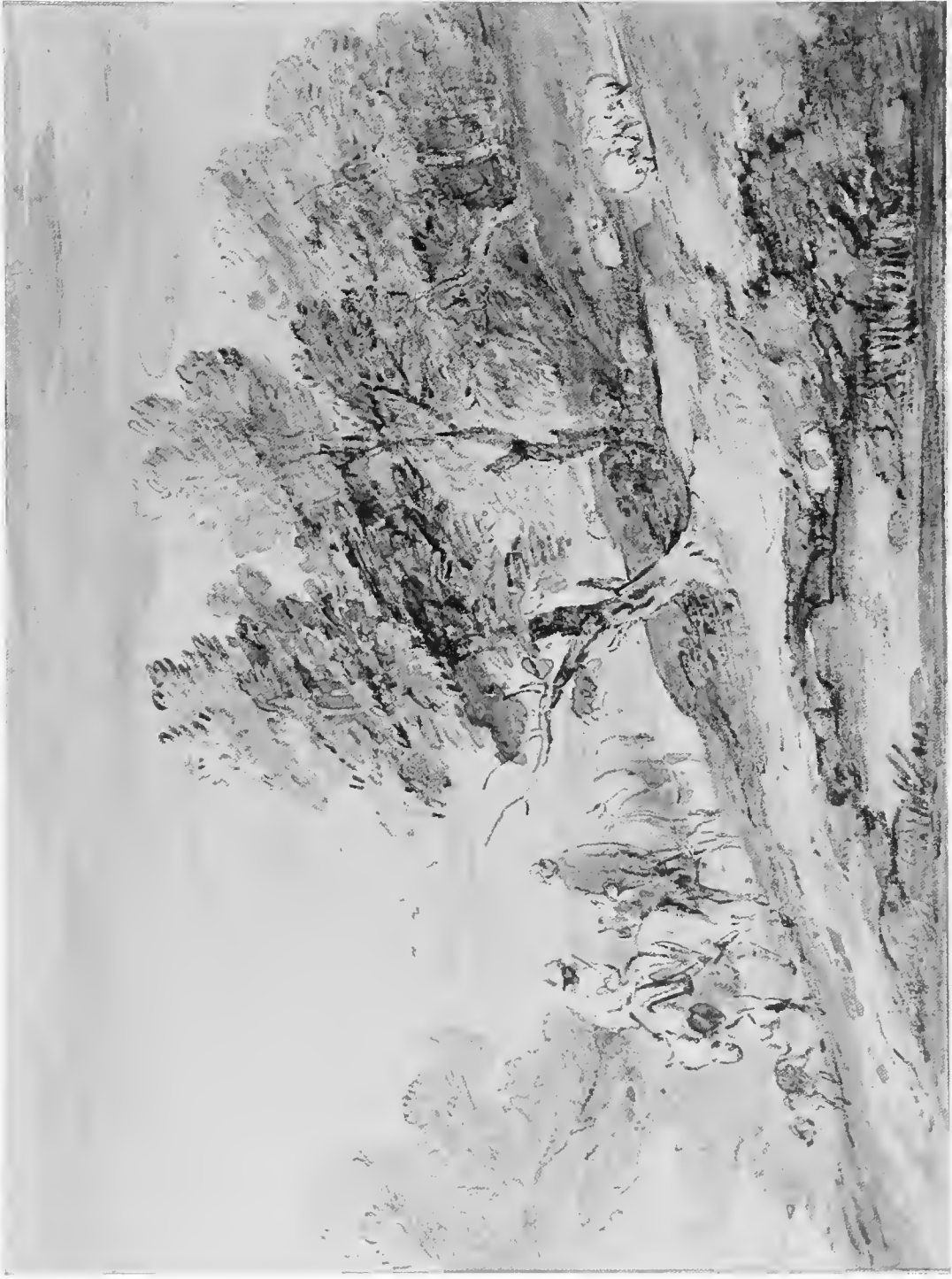
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A PENCIL STUDY





STUDY OF ROCKS AND TREES



STUDY FOR THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY



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LANDSCAPE WITH A CHURCH



STUDY FROM LIFE



LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURES



SKETCH OF A LADY IN A REVERIE



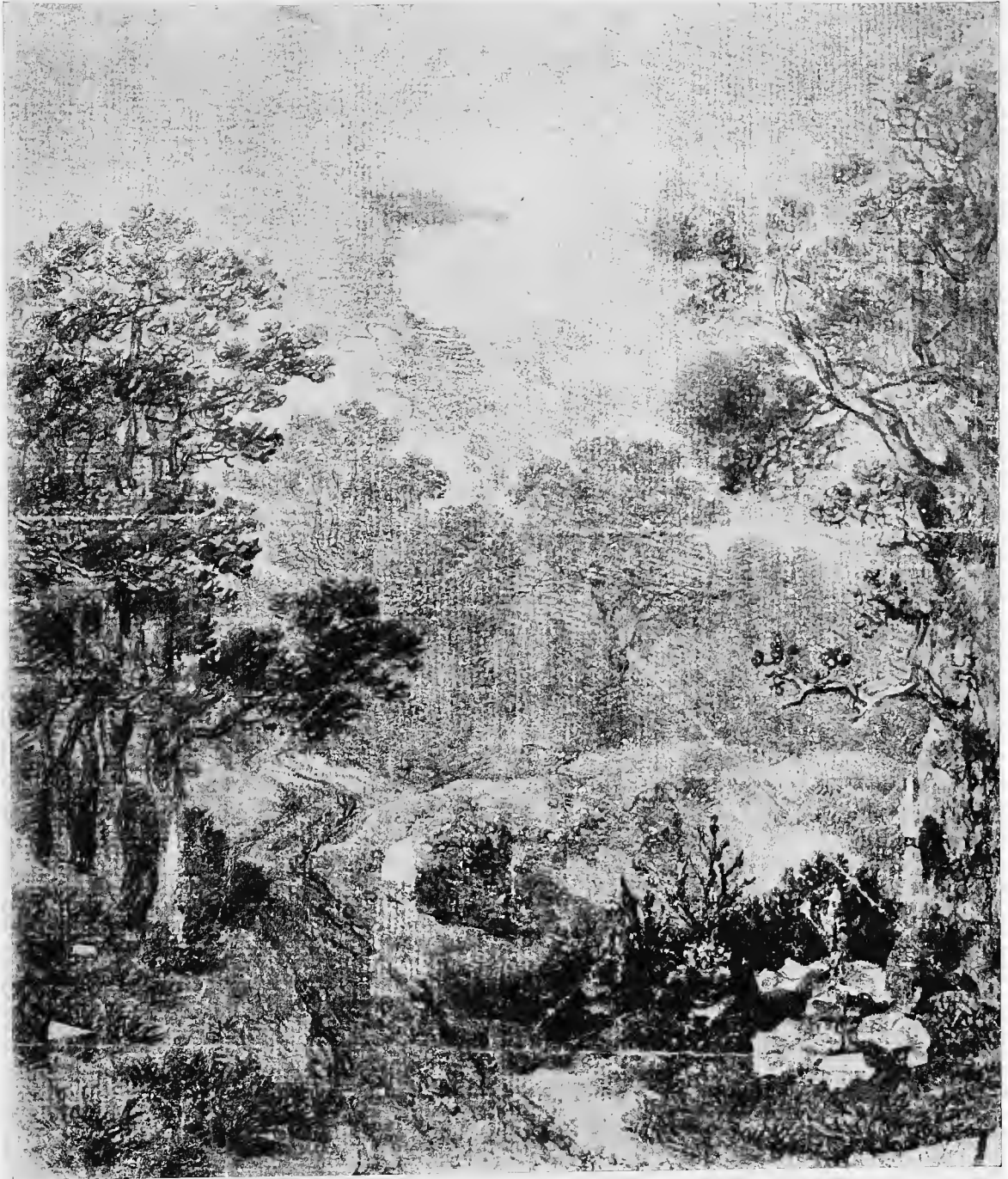
SANDY KNOLL



A MUSICAL PARTY



THE SEA CAPTAIN



STUDY OF LANDSCAPE



SKETCH FOR THE "BLUE BOY"



SKETCH FROM NATURE



LADY CLARGES



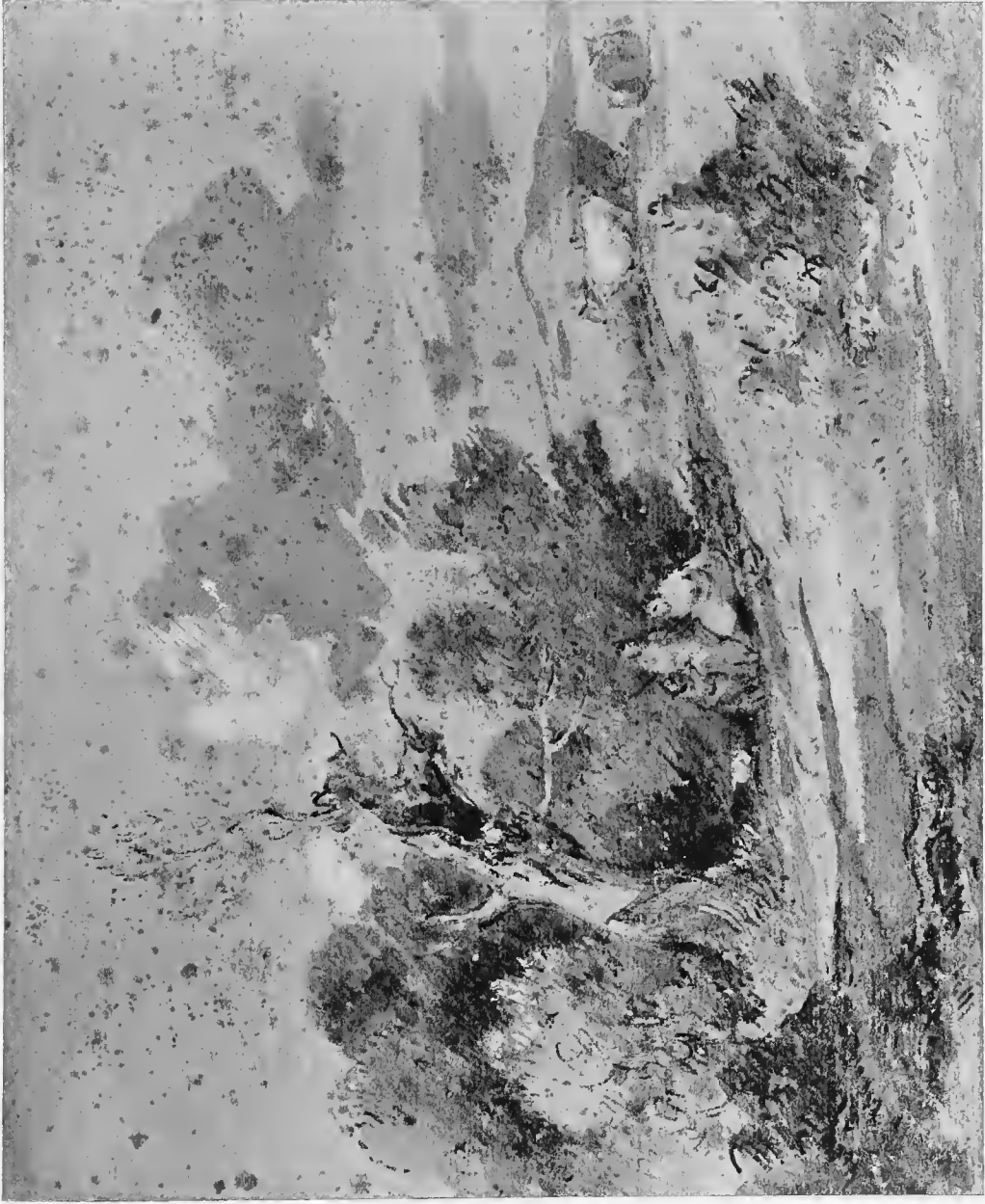
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SYLVAN LANDSCAPE



LADY WITH A HARP

