

Douglas, Edwin



Daughters of a Channel Island

MAGYAR NEMZETI GALÉRIA

ADATTARA 22726 1987

Douglas, Edwin



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Douglas, Edwin



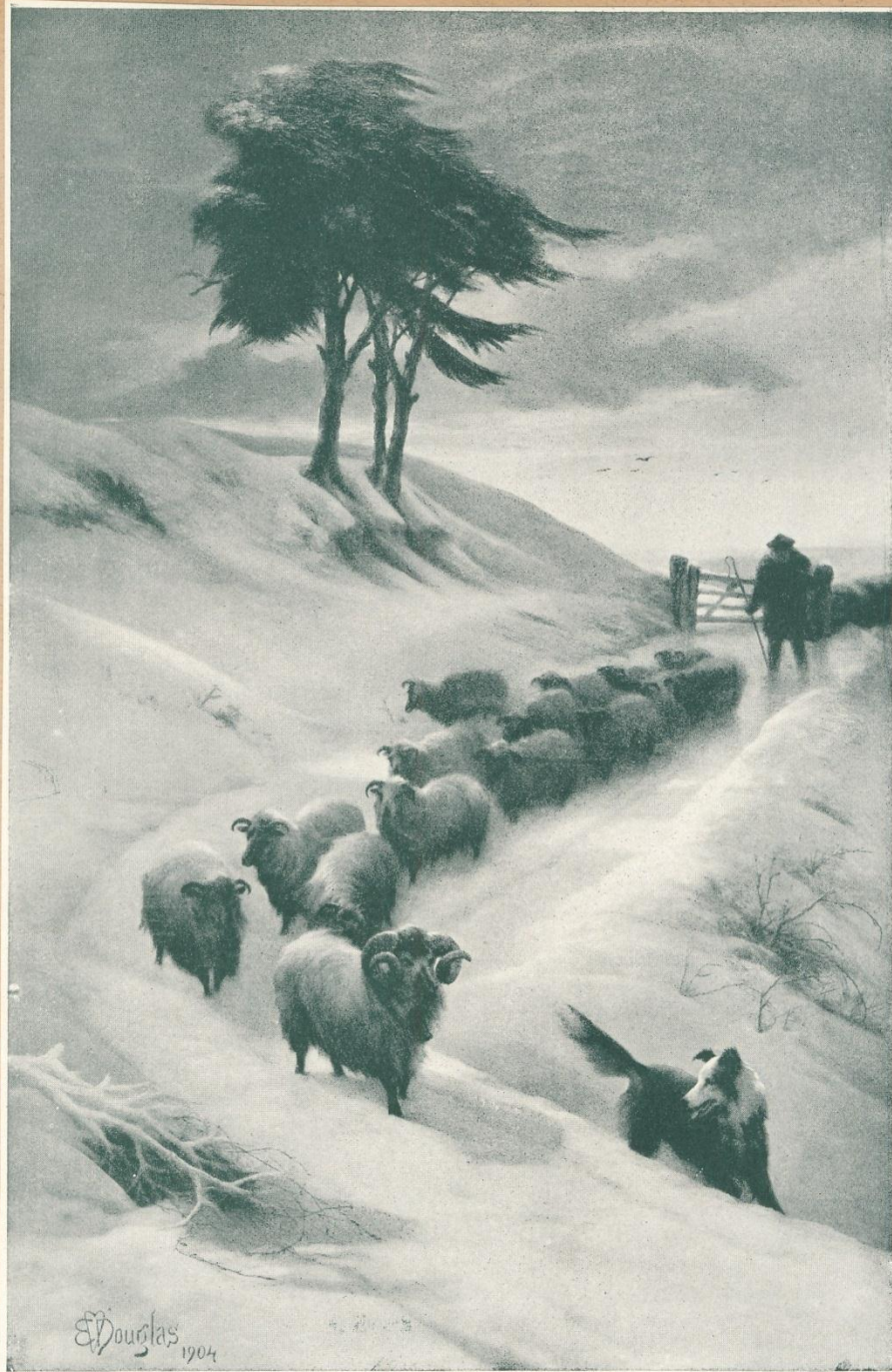
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Sunshine and snow

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The first sorrow

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Az öreg pásztor

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"ANCIENT BRITONS." BY EDWIN DOUGLAS.

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THE ART OF MR. EDWIN DOUGLAS.

BY AUSTIN CHESTER.

"THERE is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." It may be said that with Mr. Edwin Douglas this tide of fortune was a spring tide, and occurred when he, at the age of twelve, was sent home from school as too delicate to pursue there the necessary curriculum.

Children are brimful of animal feeling. They learn easily how to answer the interrogative eye, to know what a snort or a toss of the head means; thus connivance between child and beast is implicit and instinctive. It is as if the atmosphere which surrounds each lost its edge, and the two were fused in a common understanding.

At twelve years of age Edwin Douglas became the possessor of a pony which he himself, at the doctor's desire, undertook to

groom and tend, for, with far-seeing eyes, Matthews Duncan, who was the family attendant, prescribing in this edict for the moral as well as the physical health of the boy, saw how largely he would benefit were he early taught that great law of human life—responsibility.

For three years scrupulously he fulfilled his obligation to his four-footed friend, and to the riding and care of his pet he owed such health as he then possessed. A tutor made of instruction a pleasure instead of a toil, and he now looks back to those early days as to a period of peculiar happiness. At this time we may well suppose his fancy to have fluttered free wings above a choice of career.

One day he was taken by his mother to the Edinburgh Agricultural Show, and a

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MAGYAR NEMZETI GALÉRIA

little Brittany cow, that was not much larger than a full-sized Newfoundland dog, became the actual factor to determine his destiny. The wish at some future time to possess something as beautiful made him very silent on his way homewards, for he was cogitating in his young brain how the end could be obtained. His ambition crystallised, became articulate, and he asserted his intention to learn to understand animal nature, to celebrate in paint animal destiny, to become an animal painter.

a Kilmarnock paper—Kilmarnock being his native place, although the family originally came from Roxburghshire, that stronghold in ancient times of the Douglas Clan: "He was one of the leading members of the Art Club then formed, along with Messrs. Macready, T. Barclay, and J. R. Hunter. He is the last of that noble company of artistic spirits who did so much to foster the love for art in our time; and who can say how far we are indebted to those early pioneers for the cultivation of that



"VENUS AND THE HOUNDS OF ADONIS." BY EDWIN DOUGLAS.

"And here she meets another sadly scowling,
To whom she speaks, and he replies with howling."

But there arose in his case, as there has in many another, protest on the part of the parents against the child, who has not the faintest notion of the practical strain of poverty that may embitter a painter's life, embarking on a voyage to a bourn so indefinite as that of art; and the father of the young Edwin was strongly adverse to the boy's plans.

Mr. Douglas senior was himself an artist. To quote an obituary notice of him from

taste for art which has, at last, resulted in the erection of our picture-galleries, of which we are all so proud?" Mr. Douglas, therefore, fearful for him of an uncertain future, arranged to article the boy to a solicitor, and this would certainly have been done had not accident intervened—one of those accidents upon wheels that so often prove fatal, and which in this case laid up the subject of our article for some three months. During convalescence, a strong determination to follow

used to take Mr. Douglas to the stables of the show at daylight, and there, having gained admission and permission, he used to make studies of the animals until the hour arrived for the admittance of the public.

Mr. Patterson. Even in those early days his painting of horses was remarkable. He caught and imprisoned more than their actual forms upon canvas, for there is individual character in the way he paints



"BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND!" BY EDWIN DOUGLAS.
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At eighteen, his picture "The Deer Park" was bought by the Trustees of the Royal Association for the Promotion of Fine Arts in Scotland, and he received and executed two commissions for portraits of ponies, one from Mr. Rutherford and the other from

them, "printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth." The delineating of dogs and horses occupied him during the next year, then in 1868 his talent attracted the attention of James Drummond, that clever artist of the history and antiquarian lore of



"SPRING." BY EDWIN DOUGLAS.

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through his painting of "The Porteous Mob."

He it was who, noting the picture "The Consultation"—a collie dog watching at his sick master's door—which was on exhibition at the R.S.A., wrote to the young painter: "Allow me to become the purchaser of your beautiful picture for my friend, Mr. John Pender, Minard Castle"—an appreciation followed up, two years later, by his buying from the Scottish Academy, where it was being exhibited, a picture called "The Black

Misses Tennant on horseback," the success of these pictures led to his painting Sir Robert Jardine's son, several horses, and various dogs, "as hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs, shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are 'clept all by the name of dogs.'" Subsequently he painted many of the most famous of Sir Robert's racehorses.

1879 was the first year in which he exhibited at the Royal Academy "The Watch Tower," and from that time on we



"A HIGHLAND POST-OFFICE." BY EDWIN DOUGLAS.

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Watch," for Miss Burdett-Coutts. This hangs now on the staircase of the Baroness's house in Stratton Street, and, as Mr. Burdett-Coutts wrote to Mr. Douglas a short time ago, there "it looks very well."

The first important departure from this line of subject occurred when Mr. Douglas was twenty-one, and through the instrumentality of Mr. Drummond, who then gave to him an introduction to Sir Charles Tennant, which led to his branching into what we may call equestrian portraiture.

find his name, with scarcely a break in the catalogues, represented annually by two, three, or more pictures.

In 1872 he did what so many of his countrymen have done—he crossed the Tweed, and with his father, mother, and sister, established himself in England, in a house at Westcott, near Dorking.

The portraits executed for Sir Charles Tennant in 1869 were followed in 1870 by fourteen pictures of Mr. Douglas's friends of the Tennant family: "Portrait of Lady

Lady Ribblesdale) and "Margot" (now Mrs. Asquith), "The Gate of the Hospice," "Glen, a Collie Dog, and Sheep," "A Dog's Head," "A Staghound's Head," "Spaniels and Wild Duck" (lately destroyed by fire at "The Glen"). In the same year we note that Sir Robert Jardine bought five pictures, became the possessor of another in 1871, and that in 1895 "A Member of

Queen Elizabeth, and father of the lady who, in 1874, became Mr. Douglas's wife.

Almost immediately after the marriage the young couple settled in Surrey, buying the delightful old Manor House, Lawbrook, a commodious and irregularly added-to house which had a charming garden and—great desideratum to an animal-painter—seven acres of land.

At Lawbrook, in addition to his hard and



"MATERNAL ANXIETY." BY EDWIN DOUGLAS.

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the Hunt" also passed into his collection. Mr. C. F. Lutwidge has also, at various times, been a purchaser; and His Majesty has a portrait of "Persimmon," in addition to "The First of September," a picture bought by Queen Victoria and given by her to him as a birthday present in 1873.

In "Persimmon" Mr. Douglas has what might almost be termed a family interest, for Newminster, the sire of Hermit, and great-grand sire of Persimmon, was the property of Mr. Philip Feake Martin, the direct descendant of Sir Richard Martin,

strenuous work, Mr. Douglas found time for much enjoyment of country interests and hobbies; he became a member of the Surrey Union Hunt, which was under the mastership of that fine old sportsman, Mr. Francis Scott; he became a member, too, of the Royal Agricultural Society; was made an honorary member of the Jersey Cattle Society, for which, by the by, he designed a medal; established a small Home Farm of his own, and, as an after result (in 1882), gained for one of his pure-bred Jerseys a "Reserve Number" and a "Highly



"MOTHERS OF OUR KINGS TO BE." BY EDWIN DOUGLAS.

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"GROUND GAME."

By EDWIN DOUGLAS.

Commended" at the Bath and West of England Show at Guildford.

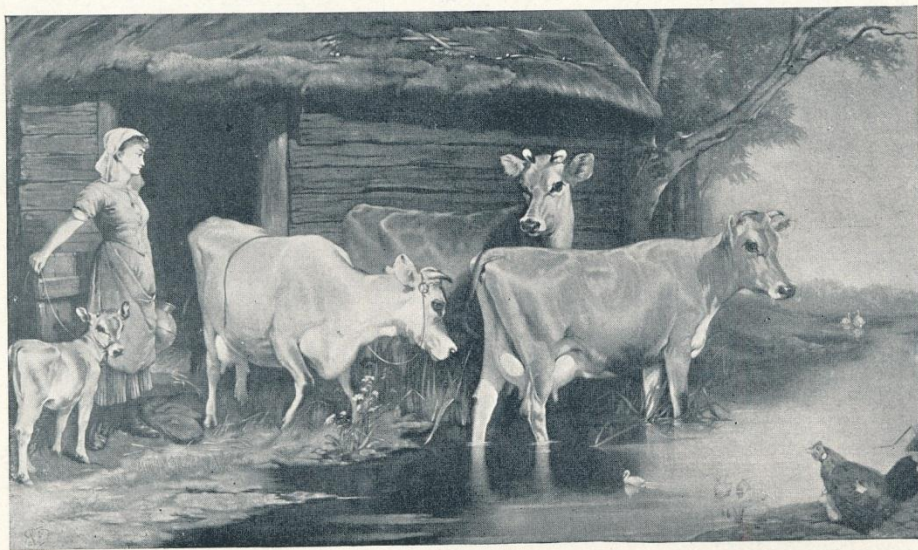
He has painted men and women, sheep, dogs, cows, horses; and of the last, many famous ones, and amongst them "Pretender," "Mandrake," "Thornwaldsen," "Beauty Fair," "Ratton," "White Feather," "Bay Comus," "Leprochaun," "Ram Lal," "Newminster," and "Persimmon"—not a bad record.

Although they did not immediately catch on with the public, Mr. Douglas's Jersey cattle pictures eventually became enormously popular.

In all Mr. Douglas's pictures of these graceful, deer-like creatures, we note the

manically, the five-guinea proofs rapidly reaching twenty-five guineas in New York. Mr. Douglas's work is indeed enormously appreciated in America, an appreciation which he modestly accounts for by the Americans "having taken up the sleek little Jersey as a home pet"—an explanation which we might credit did not "Maternal Anxiety," "British Matrons," "Young England," and pictures of similar class, run them close in popularity.

The insight of Mr. Douglas into animal intelligence is direct, and, as a result, all he relates about them is truthful. It is indeed this veracity which has made his enormous print-popularity; for we are "a sporting and



"PRIZE JERSEYS." BY EDWIN DOUGLAS.

Reproduced by permission of Sir James Blyth, Bart.

truthfulness of the fine, short, curved-in horn, the white zone behind the black muzzle, and the eyes, which have so gentle and docile an expression.

Of what Mr. Graves, whose reprints of the pictures have reached a phenomenal number, calls "The Channel Island Series," there commenced in 1875 to follow, one after another, "Alderneys," bought for 300 guineas by Mr. Tate and now in the Tate Gallery of British Art at Milbank; "Buttercup and Strawberry," "Mother and Daughter," and some fifteen or more felicitous renderings of Jersey cattle life and character.

Many of these were published by Mr. H. Graves, and proved an extraordinary success

a petting people." He is the sympathetic historian, by illustration, of animal nature, and supplies to us a graphic literature, which is in sentiment invariably suggestive and not infrequently moving. The drama he portrays is never incredible, the incidents never exorbitant, the characterisation never forced.

Landseer illustrated human motives by means of animals, but Mr. Douglas never moves his from their natural environment. His pictures are among the good things in literary art, and it is literature not of mystical, mediæval, high romantic type, but simple annals of the pasture-folk who pen the flocks and herd the cattle. His canvases are vigorous and accomplished in method, the



"A MORAL LESSON." BY EDWIN DOUGLAS.

Portrait of William Bruce Douglas.

"The dog, to gain some private ends,
Went mad, and bit the man;
* * * * *
The man recovered of the bite,
The dog it was that died."—*Goldsmith.*