

We hear how the naturalistic landscape backgrounds of fifteenth-century paintings swallow up the foreground, as it were, in the sixteenth century till the point is reached with specialists such as Joachim Patinier, whom Dürer called 'the good landscape painter',³ where the religious or mythological subject dwindles to a mere 'pretext'. Though sporadic attempts by isolated geniuses such as Lotto and Altdorfer to do without a subject altogether are noted, it appears from these accounts that landscape painting in the modern sense was introduced by such minor masters as Jakob Grimme or Herri met de Bles who paved the way for Pieter Breughel.⁴

One may admit the substantial accuracy of this picture and yet feel that something must be missing from it. It somehow fails to do justice to what Norgate called the 'Noveltie' of the *genre* which here seems to emerge through the sheer atrophy of religious painting. Yet of all the '*genres*' which the sixteenth-century 'specialists' began to cultivate in the North, landscape painting is clearly the most revolutionary. *Genre* painting proper remained for a long time wedded to the didactic conceptions of mediaeval art, illustrating proverbs and pointing moral lessons. Even still-life painting could draw its justification from the allegorical and emblematical tradition which sanctioned such motifs as *Vanitas* symbols or representations of the Five Senses. Of course, Landscape too has its traditional themes, such as the *Occupations of the Months* or the *Four Seasons*, but it could hardly point to such isolated themes as its sole *raison d'être*. Yet, after the middle of the sixteenth century, landscape became an acknowledged subject for both paintings and prints. In the interiors of art shops and collectors' 'cabinets' painted by Jan Breughel or H. Jordaens (Fig. 145), 'pure' landscapes are shown to belong to the regular stock in trade.⁵ It is the period when van Mander devotes a whole chapter of his didactic poem to this important branch of art. Landscape painting had become an institution. It is with this institutional aspect, not with the stylistic development, that this paper is concerned. The difference between these aspects may be demonstrated by one famous example: to the stylistic approach Dürer was one of the world's great landscape painters. Yet, as E. Tietze-Conrat has shown,⁶ he never took the step into the institution of landscape painting. He probably regarded his famous topographical watercolours as studies which he could not sell for honest money. Even Lotto, who painted his first pure landscape under the influence of Dürer's art, may have been encouraged to take this step by another institutional tradition—his landscape predella really forms part of a frame, and may thus have been connected in his mind with the *intarsia vedute* on stalls and woodwork. How different is the position after the middle of the sixteenth century. A Lautensack, a Hirschvogel (Fig. 146), or a Coninxloo regard it as their trade to produce landscapes, and their products are accepted as a matter of course.

In his fundamental essay on landscape painting, M. J. Friedländer devoted some pages to the emergence of this type of 'specialist'⁷—the artist who no longer