

THE VALE ARTISTS.

III.—LUCIEN PISSARRO.

Lucien Pissarro is the eldest son of the famous French Impressionist, Camille Pissarro, who, though he was working in the time of Manet, and before the advent of Degas, still retains the exquisite skill as a colourist



LUCIEN PISSARRO.—CHARLES SHANNON.

which has brought him to the front rank of contemporary art. Lucien Pissarro was the first artist in France to engrave his own work on wood, and may, perhaps, claim to have initiated much of the charming colour-printing now met with in France.

His work has appeared in the *D'al*, from which "Solitude" is taken. He has just completed a little book called "The Queen of the Fishes," founded on an old Valois legend, from which it has been translated by Margaret Rust. This he has engraved with his own hand, and he has printed it in colours and gold. The production of this work, which is



SOLITUDE.—AN ENGRAVING ON WOOD BY LUCIEN PISSARRO.

being published by John Lane, and limited to a hundred and fifty copies, has taken him nearly a year, and many of the pages have received six printings. A photographic reproduction of one of the pages of the book is given here. In the original there are no fewer than six colours, including the border, which is of gold. Of course, the bright-light effects obtained cannot be reproduced.

The art education that Camille Pissarro gave his eldest son was peculiar in its simplicity. When he was but a boy, the father took him into the fields round their home in the heart of Normandy, and said, "Work, my son." And so the experience started, unfettered by the rules of Schools of Art. "All rules are arbitrary," said the famous old artist; "make your own, remembering only that Art is the expression of a man's individuality." So it came about that, by study in Nature's Academy, Lucien Pissarro progressed, and made his first public appearance in the *Revue Illustrée*, engraving his own illustrations for a story by Octave Mirbeau. An example of the eagerness with which the Vale artists watch contemporary progress is shown by the fact that, when Pissarro came to London, in later years, Ricketts welcomed him as the engraver of that story in the *Revue*. Moreover, Degas found the engravings so much to his liking that he wrote an encouraging letter to the young artist, offering him one of his own matchless drawings of a dancing-girl in exchange for a set of the proofs. It goes without saying that the offer was accepted, and the sketch hangs in Pissarro's studio, among many unfinished studies of his own.

Very few artists engrave their own work, and the idea of printing in colour with various blocks is entirely Pissarro's own. The result has been completely successful, and, with very slight touches of gold and silver, he has obtained the delicate effect of dew on grass, or sunlight on fallen leaves. These effects are just what is wanted to complete the



FROM "QUEEN OF THE FISHES."

charm of his work, which, though robust and cheerful, is slight and simple in design. This simplicity is not without charm, reflecting, as it does, the atmosphere of the quaint old-world Normandy villages in which the artist studied. Nay, more; in his bold, though often arbitrary, handling of fanciful and delicate subjects, he has something of the artistic spontaneity which characterised Blake in his lighter moods, notably in the "Songs of Innocence." Granted that he lacks that intensity of purpose so evident in Blake's work, it may be recollected, to his advantage, that he deals with idyllic subjects.

The "Queen of the Fishes" has almost the richness of a missal, and has the added interest to collectors of being a "block" book, in the strictest sense of the term; while, despite the time and labour of its accomplishment, Pissarro has found time to publish a portfolio simultaneously with that of Shannon, to which I have already referred. This portfolio contains his reproduction of his father's designs, and is of great interest so far as it combines the work of the veteran, whose labour is near completion, with that of the enthusiast, whose success is just commencing.

In common with his brethren of the Vale, Pissarro is an intense lover of Japanese Art, and the happy possessor of some very old designs by great Japanese artists. Perhaps these have taught him his hatred of conventionality and complete disregard of the dogmas of schools. Yet those who are familiar with his work, and can appreciate its

simplicity and truth, can have no possible ground for complaint in the fact that he has elected to treat Nature as he has found her rather than seek inspiration second-hand. Such a training as his might well have been disastrous to an artist who acquires art as others acquire knowledge of law or medicine; but for the man who inherits the true instinct, freedom is the best possible aid. It saves all the worry of learning first and discarding afterwards, and keeps a man from falling into the rut of commonplace mediocrity, which is surely the worst fate that can befall



I was a little woodcutter, but now I am the KING of the FOREST! And as he finished speaking, before the man's bewildered gaze, the boy changed into a grand oak tree, with branches shooting up gold tipped to the sun & stretching wide arms to the horizon. For a while the old man stood awestruck, but a dead leaf fluttering down touched his face & aroused him. With a yell he shook his stick at the tree: "I will kill you yet!" & he rushed back into the

FROM "QUEEN OF THE FISHES."

him. Success is glorious; failure is pardonable, and possibly meritorious; but mediocrity is nothing better than absolute failure decked out in the garb of moderate success.

There is one curious fact I have so far forgotten to note. Lucien Pissarro came to England with an introduction to Shannon and Ricketts, whose work had attracted much attention in France and Belgium. When he arrived he discovered that the Continent had been first in recognising the Vale and its workers.

THEOCRITUS.

IN MEMORY OF OLD IZAAK.

There has been a little crowd almost daily peering through the railings of St. Dunstan's Church, in Fleet Street, for the white marble mural tablet in memory of Walton has attracted their notice.

To the Memory of
Izaak Walton,
Born at Stafford Aug. 19th 1633. Died Dec. 27th 1683.
Buried in Winchester Cathedral.
Author of "The Compleat Angler," also of the "Lives" of
D^r Douce, Richard Hooker, George Herbert, D^r Sanderson, &c.
WALTON resided for many years in Fleet Street at the corner of
Chancery Lane (West side), and between 1632 and 1644
was an Overseer of the Poor, a Sidesman, and a Vestryman of this Parish;
he was also a Member of the Ironmongers Company.
THIS TABLET, and the STAINED GLASS WINDOW
on the North West side of this Church, were erected by some Anglers
and other admirers of Walton in the month of April 1895.

James Hooty,
Joseph Crowther,

Churchwardens,
St. Dunstan in the West.

W. Martin Rector.

THE HOME OF THE ALIEN IMMIGRANT.

In what was once a gentleman's mansion in Leman Street, Goodman's Fields, not many doors from the whilom Garrick Theatre, there is located an institution known as the "Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter." It is a haven of refuge for the Russian and Polish immigrant on his arrival in London. Batches of fifty and sixty at the time are lodged and fed for a week or two while they are finding work or friends in this country, or until they are ready to start again for other countries. The Leman Street Shelter being a sort of clearing-house for Jewish immigrants and emigrants, it affords an opportunity for studying the Alien Immigration question on the spot, so to speak. I do not (writes a correspondent) think the time wasted which I spent the other day on a visit to this institution. A number of inmates had that day arrived straight from the Russian "Pale of Settlement," and I found them, at five o'clock in the afternoon, seated at dinner. A long table, running the length of two dining-rooms, was taken up. They were all men, and, for the most part, young men, looking very destitute, and bringing to the savoury fare set before them ravenous appetites. Each diner was provided with a basin of strong soup and half a loaf of bread, white or brown. The women, I ascertained, were cared for in a separate home. From the dining-rooms I passed into the dormitories, which are clean and orderly.

"You seem to be doing a useful work. What was the origin of your institution?" I asked the busy superintendent.

"We came into existence in 1885, principally with the object of rescuing immigrants on their arrival from the clutches of crimps. These land-sharks used to lie in wait at the docks, and, under the guise of friendship, fleece the new-comers of all they possessed. The poor greeners, landing in a strange country, and not knowing the language, fell an easy prey to their designs. They would be decoyed to the sweating-dens, and, when their little all was swallowed up in exorbitant charges for board and lodging, they were completely at the mercy of their persecutors. But, thanks to our efforts, this is now a thing of the past. Our officers meet every Hamburg vessel on its arrival at the Port of London, and so successfully has our work been carried out that we have been requested by the Local Government Board to undertake the reception of all immigrants, irrespective of creed, who are detained by the Sanitary Authorities. For the last two years we have, therefore, met all arrivals from the Continent, and we conduct them, free of charge, to their addresses, which we enter and report to the Medical Authorities. Besides saving immigrants from expense and the trouble of unnecessary detention, and protecting them from robbery, we enable the local authorities to take more effective precautions against the spread of infectious disease than would otherwise be possible."

"Your immigrants do not all settle in London?"

"Very few of them do; the majority are *en route* for other countries. It is our business to take care of them between their landing here and the resumption of their journey. Some of them have little more than their passage-money. If they were to run into debt, they could not continue their voyage. Others, again, bring large sums of money with them—as much even as £400—and they have to be protected from crimps."

"What countries do your inmates make for?"

"Out of 1874 received into the shelter last year, 500 went to South Africa, 201 to the United States, 107 to South America, 106 to Australia, and 103 to Canada." In former years the bulk of emigration was to North America, and very few made for the Cape."

"How many of the 1874 have remained in the United Kingdom?"

"Three hundred and twenty-eight. At least, this is the number of those who are not *en route* for other countries; but it is certain that they don't all settle here permanently. After a time many of them who find it difficult to get on, or are sent for by their relatives, will no doubt go abroad, or they may return to their own country. But when once they have passed through the Shelter we have no record of their movements."

"Have you repatriated any?"

"Yes, 412, against 88 last year and 71 the year before."

"That seems hopeful. Is it an indication that the persecutions in Russian are slackening, and the people are anxious to return home?"

"The Russian persecution has been somewhat relaxed during the past few years, but it is too soon to look for any definite results of the clement policy towards the Jews which it is believed the Russian Government will now adopt."

"How do you account for this increase?"

"By the fact that '92 was the year of the cholera scare, when emigrants from the 'Pale of Settlement' were stopped at the frontier by the German Government. The cordon is now relaxed."

"Are the immigrants provided with callings?"

"In most cases. Our 1874 inmates included 317 tailors, 140 dealers, 133 carpenters, 116 bootmakers, 80 merchants, besides agriculturists, mechanics, engineers, engine-drivers, stonemasons, bricklayers, blacksmiths, glass-blowers, and other occupations too numerous to mention. Three hundred and forty-six were, however, without a calling."

"What is the usual procedure in regard to your inmates?"

"On their arrival they take a bath, and, if necessary, their clothes are disinfected. The men are not allowed to remain on the premises during the day. Between breakfast and dinner, the two meals with which we supply them, they turn out. This gives those who are going to settle in London an opportunity of looking for work, and enables us to keep our premises absolutely sweet and wholesome."

"Yes, it is not impossible that the time may come when the stream of immigration will cease, and we shall be able to close the Shelter altogether. But that time is not yet."