



“VIEUX FAUNE (ARANJUEZ)”

BY SANTIAGO RUSIÑOL

than those which preceded them, that is simply because there was no room for improvement. But while technically of equal merit some of these pictures stand out from the rest on account of their subjects. The picture entitled *Jardin de Valencia* is a delightful piece of work, not only because of the beauty of the scene depicted, but also because of the masterly way in which the artist has overcome the difficulties presented by the contrast of light and shade. His sunshine communicates a feeling of warmth; in a word, it is the real sun of Spain that is here depicted. The *Vieux Faune* is a scene from the royal gardens of Aranjuez, and this again is a beautiful work. J. G. M.

TOKYO.—The fleeting springtime of Japan, replete with memories commingling charm and interest, culminates in the month of May; the holiday spirit runs strong in young and old; temple festivals, flower shows, exhibitions of various descriptions, expeditions to favourite spots in the near neighbourhood of the great cities afford a ready excuse

for the casting aside of the cares of office by all classes of the community. Among other centres of attraction that caught the popular taste this year may be mentioned the Tenth Annual Art Exhibition held at Uyeno Park in Tokyo, which always appeals to the artistically-minded section of pleasure-seekers as well as to students and members of the “profession,” printers, publishers, and others interested in the advance of art in Japan. Like its predecessors, it was open to all Japan, and comprised exhibits of sculpture, water-colours, and block prints.

It is more particularly in connection with the last branch of work that a word may be said. The exhibitors were two in number only, a Japanese and an American, the latter, Mrs. Bertha Lum, an artist whose name is well known in her own country in connection with block printing, on which she has been working for several years. Her work, which is full of charm, shows that she has been able to assimilate the methods of Japanese artists and printers to a remarkable extent, developing

Studio-Talk

along lines suggested by her own genius in new and original directions while adhering to the procedure that has come down through generations of block printers from early days.

At the present time block printing is practically obsolete save as a means of reproducing old prints. In that branch several houses are doing rare and wonderful work that cannot be too highly commended, but as a mode of expressing modern ideas the art may be said to be as good as dead. Block printing is employed for advertisement purposes and in the production of cheap prints as an economical and effective method of obtaining certain desired results, which, however, differ very considerably from those shown in the olden days. Printed on the unsuitable modern paper in colours that would not have been tolerated by the ancient masters of the art the productions of the twentieth-century block printer are generally poor in design and composition, and it is no wonder that they fail to find favour when compared with the old prints, excellent reproductions of which can now so easily be obtained. During the years Mrs. Lum has been engaged in this work, in close touch with artists and the art of block printing in Japan, little original work has been produced and no progress made; on the contrary, deterioration may be detected if the results of the last five years are critically examined.

Mrs. Lum possesses in an unusual degree that rare gift—priceless to the artist—good colour-sense, combined with an instinctive grasp of composition, and as a medium for their expression has chosen the process of block printing rather than water-colour. Composition is the keynote of the old print. The wonderful faculty of seizing on the best combination of landscape and figure possessed by the master makers of the old-day prints would appear to have descended to Mrs. Lum, who, proceeding along lines both new and original, has produced prints that for depth of tone and atmospheric effect can be compared only to some dreamy pastel rather than the flat and soulless print of modern Japan.

In the old days the paper was soft and of rather loose texture, allowing the colour to soak through in a manner that gave it depth. Nowadays, with a harder

surface to work on, the printer has to press so hard on the block that colour is rubbed off, producing a thin effect on the print. It has been reserved for Mrs. Lum, by paying the greatest attention to the laying on of colours, to obtain from the modern materials that depth of tone that is so truly an admirable feature of the old productions. By a process of reprinting with a good deal of water it has been found possible to produce the effect desired, the result being a depth of colour and warmth of tone that has delighted all lovers of block printing. Added to this technical skill are a grace of composition and an atmosphere all her own, instinct with the thought and inspiration of to-day, this combination serving to bridge the space separating block printing from the water-colour drawing.

The block printing of olden times was a



"FISHERMEN"

FROM A WOOD PRINT BY BERTHA LUM

Studio-Talk



“KITE-FLYING”

FROM A WOOD PRINT BY BERTHA LUM

handicraft, but a handicraft precious and full of beauty, which is fast becoming lost in this modern age, when the artists of Japan believe that they can only find expression and produce real works of

art through the medium of the brush. Mrs. Lum's prints stand to-day as a bridge between, on the one hand, the prints of old Japan, from which she has learned the methods and secrets of the technical



“WIND AND RAIN”

FROM A WOOD PRINT BY BERTHA LUM



"THE BAMBOO ROAD"

FROM A WOOD PRINT BY BERTHA LUM

part of block printing, and, on the other hand, the expression of the same thoughts and fancies in water-colour.

H. V. H.

ART SCHOOL NOTES.

LONDON.—At the Royal Academy on December 2, in his first lecture on chemistry, Prof. Laurie intends to make a new departure that should be of considerable value in connection with the modern revival of a beautiful and ancient art. The lecture will be devoted to a consideration of the palette of the illuminators who practised from the seventh to the end of the fifteenth century and will be illustrated with lantern slides of illuminated manuscripts in their natural colours. In his remaining addresses Prof. Laurie will deal with the proper selection and use of modern pigments; the various methods of wall-painting; media, varnishes, and tempera painting; the theory of colour in its application to painting; and the chemistry of building materials. In view of the possibility that the professorships of painting, sculpture, and architecture may be more or less in commission this winter, several members of the Academy have undertaken to give single addresses in January and February on subjects connected with these three branches of the arts.

The autumn exhibition at the Birkbeck School

of Art contained some promising work in painting, modelling, and design. An admirable design for a garden fountain in cast lead was shown by Arthur E. Harvey; and Arthur M. Boss, the winner in recent years of many prizes for drawing and painting, contributed a clever sketch in oil of a girl dancing. Good drawings from the nude by Branford Clarke were accompanied by some curious designs that showed the influence of Blake; and figure studies of interest came from William Howitt. Commendable work was also shown by Viola D. Dunkley, Gladys Hardy-Syms, Grace M. Hudson,

and Alfred M. Shiner among others. W. T. W.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Mary the Mother of Jesus. An Essay by ALICE MEYNELL. With 20 plates in colour after water-colour drawings by R. ANNING BELL. (London: P. Lee Warner for the Medici Society.) 16s. net.—It is part of Mrs. Meynell's gift in the preparation of this book to select her illustrator with so much success as the results show in this case. One can imagine collectors many years hence searching for this edition for the sake of the frontispiece, a singularly fine piece of colour-reproduction. *Mary in the House of Elizabeth* is also a plate of great beauty, adapting the sharp colour-contrast of old missals to present-day conditions without any affected imitation of methods which were not influenced as present methods must be by having to recognise the printing-press. The present-day processes, and the method they admit of, enable the artist to attain, as in the picture *Mary with the Lady Saint Anne*, atmospheric wealth of effect; and Mr. Anning Bell does this without losing the precious qualities of finish which book-embellishment demands. In this last respect he achieves a success which few attain to.

An Artist in Egypt. By WALTER TYNDALE, R.I. (LONDON: Hodder and Stoughton.) 20s. net.—Of the numerous books on Egypt, which have



"A WINTER DAY IN JAPAN" FROM
A WOOD PRINT BY BERTHA LUM.