



"A MARKEN INTERIOR." By P. VAN DER VELDEN.

## MODERN DUTCH ART AND ARTISTS.

By S. R. LEWISON.

*With reproductions from Photographs by M. J. Parsons, Buitenhof 29, The Hague.*

HOLLAND is in many ways one of the most interesting countries in Europe, her art is in a flourishing condition, and her artists are men in whom the splendid national characteristics are most strongly marked. A country whose inhabitants have had to fight in so many ways for the mere right to live, could not fail to be more than ordinarily fascinating to its intelligent inhabitants, and the patriotism of the Dutch is very much in evidence in their pictures. Not only did Holland fight for her liberty against the aggression of Spain, and take the first step in breaking up the world-power that threatened all European liberty, but a very large part of the country itself is only kept from the incursion of the sea by dint of unending labour. To the Dutchman, who lives entrenched against the rush of the sea, every

field, garden, and wood in his country has associations well nigh sacred; his ancestors have fought against Nature as well as man for their preservation—naturally he becomes intensely patriotic. The Dutch artist expresses his patriotism unmistakably. He gives his life's labour to the expression of the natural beauties of his country—the great flat expanses of greenery, with canals threading them in long straight lines, and windmills on the horizon; the beach, with its fisherfolk; the sparse plantations, the curious islands of the Zuyder Zee, the frozen waters and plains associated with every winter time—one and all serve to inspire him. In the uneventful round of daily life in a country whose natural beauties, though great, are limited, he has laboured so truly, so conscientiously, and, above all, so entirely in the service of what he presents, that Holland has been raised



"A NORTH HOLLAND CHARIOT." BY OTTO EERELMAN.

above most other European countries so far as art is concerned. Spain sends her artists to Italy; the Frenchmen of the academic schools are beyond the reach of hope and ignore Nature; except where Belgium has borrowed from the modern and independent schools of France, Belgian art is in a bad way; and no very remarkable spirit stirs the dry bones of modern art in Germany or Italy. But Holland remains vigorous and progressive in her art, full of enthusiasm and free from decadence, serving Nature, who never grows old and is always ready to tell her familiar stories in a new way.

a more enduring quality than any of these. Men like Mauve, Artz, Mathew Maris, and Mesdag in all their best pictures give a far more complete presentment of life. They choose their subject, select for presentment what is most vital in it, and then invest it with all the associations that belong to the country and the time. The Neapolitan children waiting for the fishing-boats' return on the hills that look out on to the Mediterranean have nothing in common with the children in the pictures by D. A. C. Artz reproduced here; the shepherd taking his flock to the homestead on the plains of



"THE SEWING SCHOOL." BY G. HENKES.

The lovers of the sea, of the farm, of the narrow, picturesque streets of old towns, of the crowded or deserted beach, of the shepherd's flocks and herds, all bring an intense application to their work; and in addition to the pictorial side of art, one is conscious of something more subtle, something belonging more especially to the æsthetic side of painting, the quality that may best be called atmosphere. Permanent interest could not long be attached to a mere record of fact, even accompanied by correct drawing, proper perspective, and pleasing colour; all great masters give their pictures

Estremadura is quite another person from the shepherd in Anton Mauve's beautiful picture. These differences are not of costume, they are something deeper and wider, and the man who makes a picture entirely pictorial misses them altogether. The great majority of the modern Dutch masters whose pictures are given here know their country intimately in its many physical aspects; the dullest day has its beauties; to them the drawn-in autumn, with its mists from sea and land, its infinitely mournful aspect, is as beautiful in its own way as the brightest, most



"WINTER LANDSCAPE NEAR DELFT." BY LOUIS APOL.



"WINTER TIME." BY LOUIS APOL.

musical night of spring watched in the woods of Haarlem. The work of the fields and life of the seashore offer inexhaustible opportunities, and the best of the modern Dutchmen are masters of land and sea scape. It is probable that no country has a saner or purer national art than Holland has to-day, because the artist sits at Nature's feet, and finds no aspect of his native country's life unworthy of the best work that is in him.

In writing of modern art in Holland, it must be admitted that the qualifying adjective has been stretched to an extent that may justify criticism. Some of the greatest

indisputable. A master of composition and colour, he knew his country in all or most of its many moods. His work gives us something of Holland itself; full of natural sentiment, but entirely free from sentimentality; not in any way theatrical, albeit always properly pictorial. His pictures appeal to every cultured mind, but not less to the artist than to the layman. In the days of his youth, Anton Mauve was a pupil of the painter, P. F. van Os, and worked at Haarlem, where even to-day the native life preserves its pristine simplicity, and few sounds of the great world beyond Holland seem to penetrate. No fellow-



"A WELCOME REST." BY W. K. NAKKEN.

of the men under consideration were born in the 'thirties of the nineteenth century; a few have been dead for several years past, and the living are very old men. On the other hand, it may be urged that their best work has been done in the years that are within the recollection of the average reader whose thirtieth birthday has yet to arrive. Anton Mauve, whose work is presented here, is a case in point. Born in Zaandam the year after Queen Victoria ascended to the throne of Great Britain, he died—so far as he can die—some twelve years ago. He has few rivals among painters of sheep and cattle, and his pictures have found a wide and appreciative circle of friends not only in Holland, where they are highly prized, but in England and America. His qualities are

countryman has yet risen to fill the place he has vacated.

Most visitors to Holland know Scheveningen, the Dutch Ostend, a gay, bustling place, with wonderful beach and ample accommodation for the thousands of visitors who patronise it during the summer months. There is a fine terrace along the Dunes, the Kursaal is the finest in Holland, and behind the town are delightful woods. Scheveningen is the Mecca of sea lovers among the Dutch artists, and very many have lived and worked there for many years past. Of the painters represented here, D. A. C. Artz, Elchanon Verveer, B. J. Blommers, and Philip Sadée have all been hard workers at Scheveningen. It is a very accessible place, easily reached by steam trams from the Hague, and the



"COMRADES." BY OTTO EERELMAN.

beautiful beach is at its best when the *pinkens* come in heavily laden with spoils of the sea, which are sold by auction forthwith. By the way, there are some unpleasant memories for Englishmen here, for outside Scheveningen the Dutch Admiral de Ruyter gave a very decisive thrashing to the allied French and English fleets, in the seventeenth century. Happily, the majority of foreign visitors have forgotten their history.

David Artz was born at the Hague in 1837, and studied under Josef Israels, the veteran Dutch painter, who is still alive.

He was a pupil of his brother, S. L. Verveer, who predeceased him, and he did most of his work at Scheveningen. The municipal authorities of the Hague bought one of his most characteristic pictures, "Old Tars," which is reproduced here, and hangs in the Municipal Gallery at the Hague, in company with some fine works by his contemporaries, including a sunrise and a storm at sea by Mesdag, and Anton Mauve's famous "Pasturage." B. J. Blommers, the last of the painters mentioned as working at Scheveningen, lives there to-day. He cannot be far off his seventieth year, and has

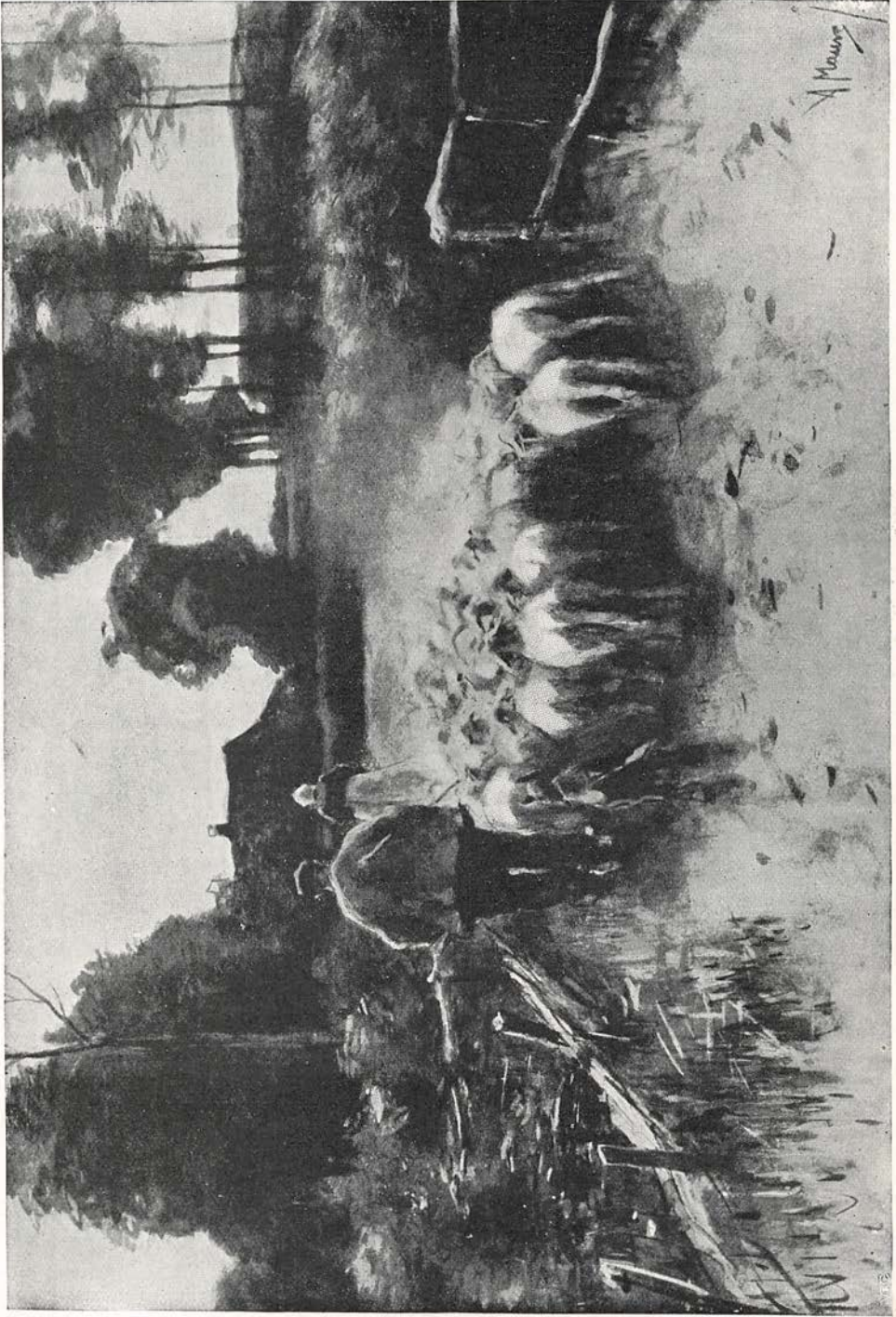


"FAITHFUL SHEPHERDING." BY ANTON MAUVE.

Artz, who died some ten years ago, lived for several years in Paris (1866-71), but Dutch scenery and fisherfolk were always more to his liking than any other subjects, and his greatest success was in their treatment. His work has a great vogue in America, where a large proportion of it is to be found to-day, most being sold direct from the exhibitions where it was first shown. Apart from the prettiness to which the great part of its popularity is due, there are very substantial qualities about the work that David Artz has left on record. Elchanon Verveer died two years ago, far in his seventies.

a large following in England and America. He is a painter of interiors, a man whose development as a colorist is quite remarkable. His master in painting was Bisschop.

From Holland to Australia is a far cry, but the artist P. van der Velden, whose work is represented here, emigrated to Australia some ten years ago, when he was in his sixty-fifth year. I believe he is still alive. He had a very curious career, teaching himself to paint, and practising without any reference to established masters. Village scenes were his special study, and he did some clever pictures of interiors in the



"GOING HOME." BY ANTON MAUVE.



island of Marken. Without being the equal of the best Dutchmen of his time, he is a clever painter, whose development has been very interesting. We may remember in this connection that the masters of the great Impressionist movement in France have been equally independent of the schools, and that they have found out by experiments what they have learned with regard to colour. While a certain amount of tuition seems necessary to teach drawing and perspective, the best painters have always been the men

Hague, where he still lives. He studied in the studio of Jan Hoppenbrouwers, and is best known to-day for his winter scenes. Two splendid snow pieces are in the gallery at Amsterdam; another, by no means inferior, may be seen in the Hague Municipal Gallery. Dutchmen have always been celebrated for their snow scenes; and it is not to be wondered at, for the winter in Holland is a very real thing, yielding such an annual harvest of skating carnivals and ice festivals as we in England never know. Perhaps Lincolnshire



"WHEN THE TIDE GOES OUT." BY B. J. BLOMMERS.

who preserve their independence, and having studied, ignore what they had been taught.

William Karel Nakken, best known for his pictures of horses, is another of the old painters still in the land of the living. He was born in the Hague in 1835, and studied art under Donoi. For many years he lived in Normandy, where much of his work was done. Apart from his Dutch birth, he is not a very pronounced Dutchman: his painting has treatment that recalls his French associations; but he is a popular artist in Holland and out of it. Louis Apol is a comparatively young man, having been born a little more than fifty years ago at the

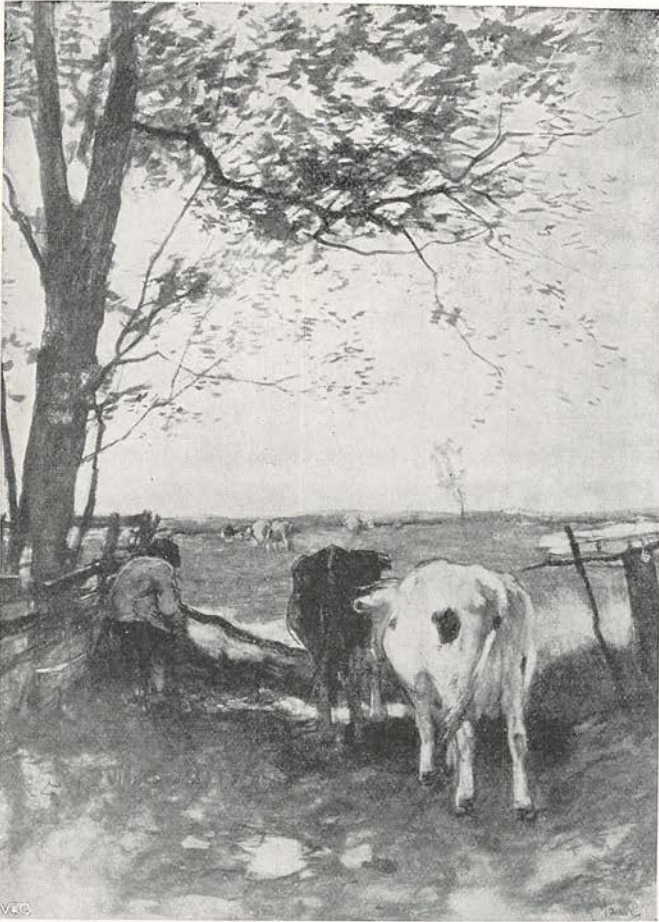
is the only English county that gets an occasional suggestion of a Dutch winter. The observant Dutchman is accustomed to the varying aspects of an ice-bound land, whose canals and dykes are frozen over, whose work stops almost mechanically for some brief season; and the mild springs and pleasant summers give him the sense of contrast that is necessary to enable him to treat the winter with proper appreciation. The two Teniers, J. van Ruysdael, Nicholas Berckem, and A. van der Neer are perhaps the best known of the older men who gave us vivid pictures of winter life in Holland, and Louis Apol has followed worthily in their train, giving



"THREE GENERATIONS." By D. A. C. ARTZ.



"THE FISHERMAN'S CHILDREN." By D. A. C. ARTZ.



"PASTURAGE." BY ANTON MAUVE.

us from time to time studies of the more sombre side of the season. At the same time, it may be suggested that the old methods of snow painting have not been as successful as the more modern ones. Delightful snow effects have been secured by the Impressionists, whose work is perhaps the most vivid to be seen to-day. Monet, Pissarro and Sisley, in France, have done the best snow work I have seen; and a Dutchman, Yonking, whose work is not shown here, has done even finer work than Apol.

Philip Sadée was born in the same year as P. van der Velden, and, like him, had no other acknowledged master than Scheveningen beach. He lives at the Hague to-day, and a considerable proportion of his work finds its way to England. G. Henkes, who lives at Voorburg, a little way beyond the Hague, is best known as a painter

of Dutch interiors. He is a native of Delftshaven, near the Hague, where he was born in 1844, and was a pupil of Spoel. Otto Eerelman, who is well known for his pictures of dogs and horses, is a native of Groningen, and lives at the Hague. He is a very popular painter, whose work has found many friends in Germany and England. Apart from the subjects chosen, there is no great interest attaching to his pictures, which are not especially remarkable for their artistic treatment.

Greater than most of the painters just mentioned, Hendrik Willem Mesdag claims and repays particular attention. He was a very old man when he died two or three months ago, having been born more than seventy years ago at Groningen. For some time he was a pupil of Alma Tadema, and he lived at the Hague, where so many of the leading Dutch artists have made their home. The sea has always been the object of his closest study, and his sea pieces are known all the world over. He has presented the sea in all its varying moods—in storm and

calm, summer and winter, sunrise and midnight, sunset and high noon; and his work has the fine quality of poetry that may be seen in Anton Mauve's paintings and in the wonderful canvases of Mathew Maris. There is a characteristic sea piece in the Hague Municipal Gallery, where Bosboom's fine interior at St. Peter's at Leyden, and Verveer's "Old Tars" are hung. In the private galleries of some of the best known collectors of Europe and America one may find Mesdag's sea scenes; the painter did no other than sea work, and all the painting I have seen, whether in public or private galleries, is of a very high quality. Its standard of quality is surprising, and even in the latter days the artist's right hand did not lose its cunning. There is no more interesting figure among the modern Dutch artists, no man whose work is more justifiably esteemed. His long and devoted observation



"OLD TARS." By ELCHANON VERVEER.

of the sea has been productive of remarkable results.

This brief survey of the painters who are rightly or wrongly called moderns does not nearly exhaust the list. There are many artists of high and well-earned repute whose

work is not shown here for want of space. The veteran Josef Israels is one of them. He did work that was interesting but conventional for many years, and suddenly, when past the prime of life, painted pictures of far greater worth, two of the most notable being

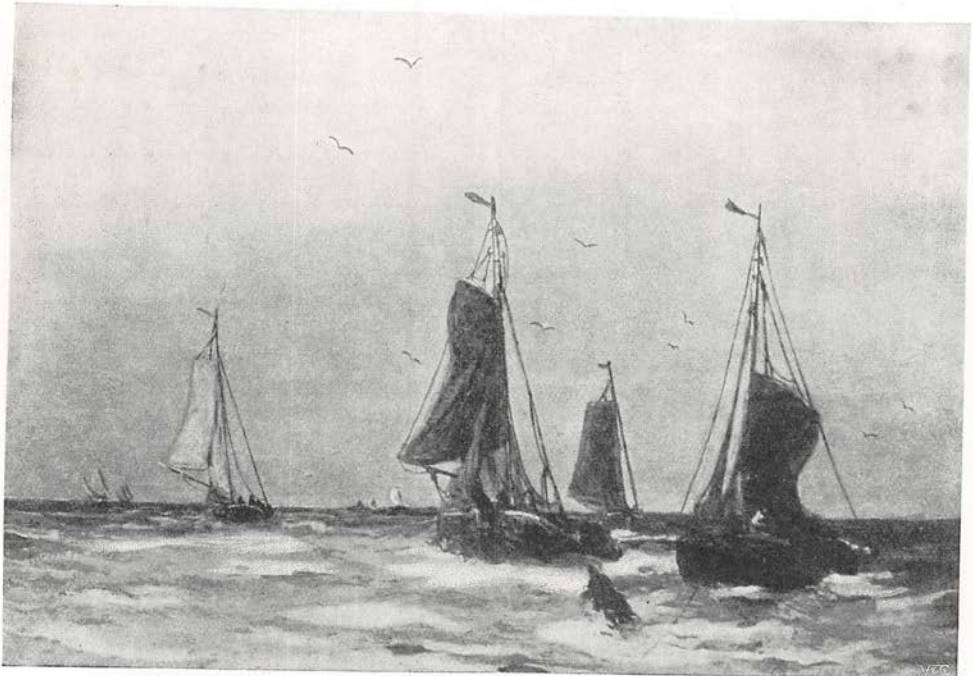


"DUTCH FISH-WIVES." By P. SADÉE.

his pictures of an old Jew in the Ghetto of Amsterdam, and of David playing before Saul. His work may be seen in the Hague (where he lives to-day), Haarlem, and Amsterdam, and he has a son who is a most promising artist. Israels is approaching his eightieth year. Jan Bosboom, who died in 1891, is another artist whose work is of a high order of merit, and there is a good collection of it in various public galleries, or in private collections, that may always be seen by artists or students who take a keen interest in painting. Yonking, to whom I have already referred, lived and worked for some time in Paris, and died some years ago. Amsterdam, Haarlem, and the Hague are full of wealthy amateurs who are devoted to art, and have in many cases been astute enough to find the best painters among their countrymen before the success of the artists outside their own country had made their pictures hard to get. Ten Kate, Jan Koster, the brothers Maris—the list might be lengthened considerably—are all artists whose works must be studied carefully by anyone who desires to receive an accurate impression of the best nineteenth century art work in Holland.

The keynote of all the work I have seen, judged in the mass, is genuine devotion to art. None of the men I have mentioned

seems to desire that his own personality or mannerisms shall be obtruded, or that the artist shall be as much in evidence as the work. Their land, grey or green, a country of dunes and polders, of dykes and canals and windmills, of carefully cultivated gardens, parks, and pleasure-grounds, of high, narrow, gabled houses, red and white, is a country where cleanliness and contentment seem to go hand in hand, where a simple piety, that never becomes wearisome to the spectator, underlies and elevates the simplest life. Loungers and idlers are few and far between. The dignity of labour is never overlooked. No measure of success has availed to turn the artists from their work, or to make the best of them repeat successes for the sake of the market. And while the old men are passing, one notes with pleasure that the younger generation has inherited the best traditions, and approaches its labours with hand and eye well trained, with a full consciousness of the progress that has been made in other countries by independent workers, and a determination to benefit by what is best in it. There may not be another Rembrandt or another Franz Hals to come from Holland, but we may rest assured that there will be no lack of work that is inspired by all the best traditions of the country.



"DUTCH FISHING-BOATS IN CALM WEATHER." BY H. W. MESDAG.