

The Alexander Young Collection—II. The Daubignys.

THE COLLECTION OF MR. ALEXANDER YOUNG. II.—THE DAUBIGNYS.

IT is a little difficult to define the exact position of Daubigny amongst the group of painters now generally known as the Barbizon School, for although he was at one with them in spirit and feeling, and worthily upheld their ideals and their doctrines, he "arrived" only when the great struggle which freed landscape painting in France was at an end. He was therefore a follower rather than a pioneer of the movement with which the older men were more or less associated. Moreover, he was to be seen only occasionally at Barbizon, for the banks of the Seine and Oise had a wonderful fascination for him, and it was there that he did his finest work and spent the greater part of his life. Drifting in his small boat along the beautiful Oise, he found, with little searching, those wonderful scenic effects, of trees thick with foliage reflected in the silent stream, which were a constant source of inspiration to him and form the subject of many of his most popular, though not always his most successful, works.

Essentially an individual artist, Daubigny was

but little influenced by the other members of the group. In certain of his works, especially those treated in a more poetic strain, he, to some extent, approaches Corot, and again in his more robust style he sometimes suggests the grandeur and simplicity of Rousseau. But his attitude towards Nature was somewhat different to that of either of these men. Whereas they were for ever striving to render her in the spirit of their own romantic personalities, to reveal those hidden beauties which inspired them in all their work, Daubigny was content to interpret Nature in his own naive manner with unerring fidelity. The two older men, who had broken away from classical conventions, read into Nature and transferred to their canvases far more than was apparent to the ordinary mind, each according to his own temperament: they were subjective painters; while Daubigny, a more objective interpreter of Nature, may be deemed the forerunner or even the founder of a school of modern landscape painting which depicts pure Naturalism undisturbed by any emotional element. It has indeed truly been said, that whereas Corot and Rousseau were painters of Nature, Daubigny was a painter of the country.

It is generally admitted that Daubigny's work



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BY C. F. DAUBIGNY

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