

*James Aumonier, R.I.***T**HE LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS  
OF JAMES AUMONIER, R.I.  
BY WALTER BAYES.

A FRIENDSHIP between two families persisting now into the second generation makes it so difficult to assume the position of complete impartiality proper to a critic that I propose in writing of Mr. Aumonier to discuss not so much the stature as the build of the man, and to give within a necessarily narrow compass some idea of the qualities I find in his work. And this not of course for the benefit of painters, for each of the several factions which respectively claim at the present day a monopoly of artistic merit will be found to have a certain respect for his work, but as a hint for the conscientious layman for whom painting, and landscape painting in particular, is often a sore puzzle.

Mr. Aumonier's development would seem to have run on somewhat traditional lines. That is to say, he passed through a period of careful study, from which he emerged gradually into a freer manner. His first attempts at painting were self-taught. I have seen actually the first picture he ever did—an oil-painting of primitive character,

done from an engraving with paints supplied by the village carriage painter, and it has considerable decorative quality, and is in admirable condition in spite of the fact that more than one of the pigments used are such as chemists frown upon. His earlier manhood was spent in doing designs for calico-printing, his spare time only being available for painting, and this continued to be the case until the American War, by its bad effect on the cotton industry, made it possible for the wily designer to offer (apparently as a kindness to his employer) to put himself on "half-time." The offer was gratefully accepted, and the designer never went back, for, in the first place, he had acquired great facility in producing the realistic floral designs (then the sole fashion in cotton printing), and could turn out as many as were wanted in a short space of time; and, in the second place, he had even while at work as a designer begun to establish for himself a position as a painter. Without friends among London artists, he went, as everyone did in those days, to "Heatherley's" to study, and it was a landscape shown there which brought him an invitation from Mr. Wyllie (the father of Mr. W. L. Wyllie and Mr. Charles Wyllie) to bring round to



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BY JAMES AUMONIER

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