

THE STUDIO

THE MEZZOTINTS OF MR.
FRANK SHORT, A.R.A., P.R.E.
BY MALCOLM C. SALAMAN.

WHEN the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers elected Mr. Frank Short, A.R.A., as its new President, in succession to the late Sir Francis Seymour Haden, it chose, perhaps, the most interesting, accomplished and versatile among living masters of the engraver's art. Indeed, there is no known method of making pictures upon the copper-plate which Mr. Short has not handled with originality, distinction, and complete command of all its capabilities. His etchings are, of course, among the finest and most individual done in our time—Whistler himself having admired and praised them highly; his aquatints have discovered fresh and more ample resources in the medium; but it is in the domain of mezzotint that he holds a place quite unique and commanding, so that proofs of his plates are now sought avidly by the most exclusive collectors, who, until the achievements of

Mr. Short, had believed that the great artistic manner of mezzotint had died long ago with the masters who consummated it.

Since its invention in 1642, the art of mezzotint engraving has passed through varying phases of development, but hitherto always as an interpretative or reproductive art. The great English engravers of the latter half of the eighteenth century achieved innumerable masterpieces in their translations of the great English portrait-painters, while Turner and, later, Constable recognised with splendid result the value of this richly expressive medium for the interpretation of landscape as drawn or painted; but, so far, none had seen how this beautiful branch of the engraver's art could be employed for the first-hand picturing of sea and land in poetic moods. Meanwhile, the great days of mezzotint had become a tradition, the very genius of the art seeming to have been lost in a decadence of method, and, as Ruskin thought, beyond recovery. But art calls never in vain, and mezzotint engraving was an art



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