

MISS MARGARET HICKSON.

WELL KNOWN TO MOST OF US from her landscapes and pictures of country life in our principal exhibitions, the professional career of Miss Margaret Hickson may be summed up as one of constant application and perseverance, coupled with the necessary natural artistic faculty.

In 1874 Miss Hickson entered the Slade School, and at the same time she, on the advice of Mr Dobson, the Academician, worked hard at Heatherley's School in Newman-street, and at the British Museum, from the antique.

Her course of study in the Academy Schools was attended with at least one signal success, as she in 1881 secured the then just established "Creswick Prize" for an original landscape in oils, this being the first occasion on which one of her sex had taken a landscape prize in the schools.

In 1879 the young artist produced her first exhibited picture of "Still life," which was in the Suffolk-street Gallery, where it at once found a purchaser. Next year she had at the Dudley Gallery "The Kingfisher's Haunt," a peep of a stream, fringed with trees, and in 1882, in the Royal Academy, appeared the Creswick Prize subject, "A Shady Lane," which had been bought by the Fine Art Society at the Students' Exhibition, and was again sold when it was in the Academy.

Let the world slide, let the world go, A fig for care, and a fig for woe.

And next season she was represented at both the Royal Academy and at Suffolk-street, at the former by a landscape, "Under the Greenwood Tree," two large, mossy beech stems,



MISS MARGARET HICKSON.

in a glade, with deer—a view at Albury Park; and at the latter gallery a study of a girl at a cottage door, "Feeding the ducks," the lass in a pink bonnet and striped skirt, the effect being that of late afternoon.

In the following year the artist maintained a rapidly rising reputation by painting a picture—another beech tree landscape—which was presented by some of the City Livery Companies to Mr John Bedford as a recognition of his services in preserving

Epping Forest to the public. The work was unveiled and presented by Foresters, on the occasion of a banquet at Chingford, and from thence sent direct to Mr Bedford's residence. In addition to this, Miss Hickson had a most excellent picture at the first Guildhall Exhibition, "Tom the Piper's Son," a rustic youth in a white jacket playing the flute to two children seated in a wood among the primroses.

And then in succeeding years appeared in the Royal Academy "Among the Grass"—1886—a girl in blue dress gathering flowers, and "Nurse," a study of an old woman in a white cap; "Mrs Metcalf," a portrait in pink dress—1887; "St. Mary Bourne," a landscape—1889; and "Sunset near



Photo by Topley, Ottawa

SIR JOHN THOMPSON, K.C.M.G., Q.C. THE LATE CANADIAN PREMIER.

Florence"—1890—the Ponte Rossa bridge, just outside Florence on the Pisoleso road, with buildings in grey relief against a warm sunset sky.

At the Water Colour Institute of 1891 Miss Hickson exhibited an important drawing in "A Florentine Fruit Shop," the salesman placing handfuls of oranges in a girl's frock, with other fruits and vegetables around; and in the same Gallery she next year had "The Milkman's Daughter," a lass, with pail and milking stool, threading her way through the pleasant meadows. In that year (1892) she also exhibited at the New Gallery "Spring," a flowering apple tree against a tender sky, and vivid green foreground, with girl in lavender-coloured frock carrying a pail of water.

In addition to this class of work, Miss Hickson has painted many portraits, including those of "Mrs Charles Waterlow," "Miss Maitland," "Mr Thomas Bryant, F.R.C.S." (a presentation work), "Master Mervyn Waterlow," and a most successful likeness of "Mr Edward Cook, F.R.C.S.," presented by his colleagues to Guy's Hospital, where it now hangs in the committee room.

We are, of course, unable to give anything approaching a full list of the artist's very numerous pictures; but our purpose is served if we can in any sense illustrate the bent and scope of her talent, and the course of study that has led up to a most well-deserved success.

She paints with the same skill landscapes and portraits in both oils and water colours, and she is now engaged upon a large and ambitious figure subject, well fitted to her ripened artistic powers.

In the few details of this lady's art life, which we have so much pleasure in placing before our readers, we have naturally more or less a record of successes, without any insight into the difficulties, anxieties, and disappointments inseparable from her profession. But these she has at least bravely challenged, and, as the result of perseverance, happily overcome. The artist's life is one much chequered by light and shade. Rejected pictures, and those unsold, and only too frequently, the struggle to excel, with inadequate pecuniary means are only some of the anxieties. These and other difficulties practically unknown to those outside the profession are the lot of many handling brush or chisel. The more honour therefore to those who, like Miss Margaret Hickson, have surmounted the waves of fortune, and have secured for themselves a name in their profession.

M. P. J.

SIR JOHN THOMPSON.

WINDSOR CASTLE, on Wednesday last, was the scene of a sudden and altogether unexpected tragedy. Some few weeks ago, Sir John Thompson, the Premier of Canada, arrived in England, accompanied by his eldest daughter, hoping to escape for a short time from the wearing cares of office. On Wednesday he went down to Windsor to be sworn in as a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council, and, after the ceremony, he was invited to lunch with the Royal household. Suddenly the Premier fainted. He was carried from the Octagon Dining Room, but returned after a few minutes, saying that he "felt quite right again." He had scarcely sat down when once more he fainted, falling into Dr Reid's arms. Every assistance was rendered, but without avail. Death was due to a sudden failure of the heart's action. Sir John had just left

the Queen's presence, and Her Majesty was naturally much shocked when she heard of the sad occurrence. Sir John Thompson, who was only forty-nine years old, was a native of Nova Scotia. As a young man he gained a high reputation in his native province as a barrister of more than usual ability, and was appointed Attorney-General of Nova Scotia. Sir John Macdonald, the great Canadian Premier, was attracted by the sterling character of the young barrister, and persuaded him to enter Parliament, where he soon became Minister of Justice of the Dominion. When the great statesman passed away, it was at once seen that, as far as political ability was concerned, Sir John Thompson was the man to succeed him. Sir John was, however, a Roman Catholic, and at that time there was a great feeling in Ontario against any statesman of that religion, so Sir John Abbott was asked to form a ministry. In the fierce light which beats upon all public men, as well as upon all sovereigns, Sir John Thompson stood out boldly and fearlessly, the type of a sincere, straightforward politician; and when, in 1892, Sir John Abbott resigned, all parties, of whatever religion, turned to the statesman who has just passed from us. Six years ago Sir John was knighted, in recognition of his services on the Fisheries Commission, and last year, at the close of the Behring Sea Arbitration, in which he was the Queen's Canadian representative, he was appointed to the Privy Council.

England could not have wished for a better friend in Canada than Sir John Thompson, and now that "the reaper whose name is Death" has stepped in she is full of sympathy for a country which in three years has lost three of its best and foremost statesmen. The deceased Premier, who was far from wealthy, was married in 1870 to a Miss Abeck, and leaves five children. When we think of him we are reminded of Pope's celebrated lines:

Statesman, yet friend of truth of soul sincere, In action faithful and in honour clear.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

A GREAT MASTER OF ENGLISH PROSE has passed away in the person of Robert Louis Stevenson. Few can have read the strange and abrupt announcement in Monday's evening papers without feeling a deep personal sorrow at the loss English literature has sustained. It is not too much to say that wherever Mr Stevenson had readers he had friends, for he was one of those authors whose personality grows upon the reader—a writer who poured his whole heart into his books, laying bare to those who studied him the innermost depths of his soul.

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh on Nov. 13, 1850, so that a few weeks before his death he celebrated his forty-fourth birthday. He belonged to a family who for generations had been famous as lighthouse engineers, and it was the novelist's grandfather, Robert Stevenson, who built the well-known Skerryvore Lighthouse. It was intended that Robert Louis Stevenson should enter the family profession, and with this end in view he studied at Edinburgh University, and attended—very seldom and very irregularly—the engineering classes of Professor Fleming Jenkin. He found engineering, however, exceedingly uninteresting, and turned



Photo by Falk, Sydney.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

his attention to law. He was called to the Scottish Bar, but opinion is divided as to whether he ever practised. Some say that he at one time held two briefs, others declare that he was never intrusted with a case. Be that as it may, it is certain that law had very little interest for him. He was always writing, and he says himself that the paper makers could not have wished for a better friend than he was. When he was sixteen he published a little pamphlet of twenty-two pages dealing with the old Covenanting days—a subject which