

# THE FIELD OF PRINTS

By Frank Weitenkampf

**A**MONG the signs of increasing interest in prints is the growing number of books on prints in general, on special media (etching, wood engraving, lithography), and on individual artists. More than one artist has been repeatedly so dealt with. Harrington's definitive catalogue of Haden's etchings is now followed by this volume of nearly one hundred re-

productions, with an illuminating introduction. Mr. Salaman takes us through Haden's artistic progress, setting out the chronological sequence with an agreeable flow of style and an easy accent of criticism. Haden's racial impulse and love of the native soil, which characterized his long devotion to English landscape, resulted in "direct transcripts, so pictorially suggestive, of familiar home scenes". Among proofs of Haden's keen insight into the craft of his art is the direction to Goulding the printer that dry point be rendered "crisp and full, never smeary". And that other dictum: "Every stroke the etcher makes tells strongly against him if it be bad, or proves him to be a master if it be good." The illustrations are happily done in photogravure, which respects the line, seen "through a screen, darkly" when the half tone is used. The whole a fine and pleasing record, for the print lover, of a great master of his art.

The juxtaposition, on the reviewer's desk, of the book on Haden and the one on sporting prints illustrates as happily as one could wish, and emphasizes forcefully, the very wide range of interest and appeal covered by what we call "prints". That term may seem to apply to but a small corner in the great field of art. Yet when we turn from "fine prints", expressions of the personality of artists such as Dürer, Rembrandt, Whistler, Haden, *et al.*, an imposing quantity, there remains yet a greater mass, produced to serve various popular demands. Among these the sporting print fills a niche of considerable proportions. Through the full response of British artists to British tastes, "sporting prints" has become largely synonymous with the products of the early nineteenth century in England,

the period of Alken, Pollard, and the rest. They had predecessors in eighteenth century painters such as Sartorius, Morland, and Stubbs, and their engravers. The story is told both in Ralph Nevill's facile text, and in the full page illustrations. The latter, grouped by subject—horse racing, fox hunting, coaching, shooting, angling—point to the fact that even this specialty has its sub-specialties, each with its distinct appeal. The wish is brought up that the American sporting print be cultivated more as a hobby; it has already begun to be written up. Today prints are being made—studies of animals in their natural environment by Benson, Clark, and others—that attract in a somewhat different way, that stir the sportsman by the association of memory, and with more art than many of the old prints. But the latter will continue to hold us by their sheer human contact.

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The Etchings of Sir Francis Seymour Haden, P.R.E. By Malcolm C. Salaman. London: Halton and Truscott Smith, Ltd. Old English Sporting Prints and Their History. By Ralph Nevill. Edited by Geoffrey Holme. London: The Studio, Ltd.