

Portraits of statesmen commend to us a livelier interest in the affairs of our nation. But above all this, there is a spirit of solemn reverence awakened by the mere presence of the likeness of distinguished men.

To bring the subject more closely to our own door, Osgoode Hall, the legal centre of Ontario, would lose one-half its dignity were it stripped of the portraits of the eminent judges of former years, which hang along its corridors. Canada unfortunately has but few institutions wherein are national treasures of art. The dearth of such institutions must ever have a deterring effect upon the growth of a national spirit. We boast with conscious pride four great halls of learning. Justly, too! Some of these have existed for nearly half a century. And have they produced no names worthy of monumental recognition? But from no university has the voice of a patriot been heard arousing the people to take one step towards the erection of a national gallery, apparently oblivious of the fact that when this century has passed away, absolutely the most valuable treasures which the nation possesses will be the despised works of painters living at this day. If it be deemed in the older countries expedient to construct marvellous galleries for the reception of art treasures, we should, commensurate with our means and opportunities, also place ourselves on record with the great nations.

But it may be contended that we do not possess treasures of art of such importance as would merit such consideration. I want to be distinctly understood, and to say plainly what I believe is necessary to the development of a national art. If the Government almost ignores the efforts of our artists, that national development

must necessarily be slow. But what is most necessary to encourage a spirit of national excellence must surely be: first, a gallery worthy of the name of art; second, the purchasing of the best pictures of the year, at such figures as will repay the painters for the time and labor spent in the work; third, encouraging the artists to paint Canadian subjects—then making the exhibitions attractive, and free to the public; and if there is in art that national spirit which I have endeavored to point out, it is a matter of great importance that it be the subject of practical and earnest effort.

Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral have done an immortal work for England, the poet's corner in the one, and the sacred tablets, commemorative of the mighty heroes, in the other. Should we not, in Toronto and Montreal, set aside all religious considerations, and adopt, at once, some honored receptacle for the repose of our most worthy sons. St. James's Cathedral, in Toronto, being one of the oldest of our churches, might well serve so noble a purpose. In literature are we to forget a Heavyside and a Sangster, and cannot their memory be best kept green forever by the painter and the sculptor's art? Then there is our duty to posterity. It is surely incumbent upon us to keep intact, as far as in our power lies, every phase of life and thought of the time in which we live. By the principles and practices of preservation, a proud sentiment is nurtured. In doing all we can we are but emulating the manly virtues of our grander sires; and the generations yet unborn will view with pride the efforts which we have made to preserve for their consideration all that was worthy in our time.