

# ART IN WAR-TIME



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WARFARE appeals to artists rather less than to any other class of men, and there has been a good deal of controversy as to whether great creative artists should be allowed by their country to endanger their lives, but surely those whose life work lies in the cultivation of beauty can be more easily spared than any other class of men! Happy is the artist who can serve his country and at the same time make use of his especial talents.

Most of the fighting nations have appointed artists to paint pictures of things of interest in the war zone. J. Boucher is the "painter to the army" appointed by the French Government. He has painted popular portraits of the chief personages on the side of the Allies, and in his military landscapes he succeeds in reflecting the natural atmosphere of warlike scenes and seizing the spirit of the figures which animate them. Numerous other well-known French painters have obtained permission to sketch in the war zone, and the result will be a realism never seen in the "Chambre de Batailles" at Versailles.

England, too, has permitted some of her best men to invade the war zone in the interests of Art. William Orpen, who has been serving in the Army Service Corps since the beginning of the war, went to the front last summer to collect material for official war paintings. Orpen's pictures are sure to be quite distinct from the ordinary productions of this type, for everything that bears his name is distinguished for both originality of outlook and technical skill. Some of the American States have their own war artists, and James Montgomery Flagg, the illustrator, has been appointed by Governor Whitman official military artist of the State for the duration of the war.

Canada is represented by A. Y. Jackson, one of our most eminent landscape painters, and by Ernest Fosberry, who is best known by his etchings. Mr. Jackson has served overseas as a private for some years, and is now an honorary lieutenant attached to the Canadian War Records Office. Both he and Capt. Fosberry have been wounded, and the latter has recently been in Canada on leave. We are glad that these appointments have been given to men whose bravery and loyalty has already been proven. Mr. Jackson's first commission was a portrait of a winner of a Victoria Cross, which is said to be most successful. He will probably do even better in open air studies, as he is accustomed to working under adverse conditions, some of his snow scenes being painted out of doors when the mercury was below zero. Shortly before the war he was sketching in the Rocky Mountains and carried his painting kit to great heights, bringing back a large collection of unusual scenes painted in such a way that the subjects lost none of their grandeur though represented on tiny sketching panels.

POSITIONS such as these can be assigned to few artists, but there remains the camouflage. The use of colour for deceiving the eye has been found of great service at the front to disguise the landscape and conceal positions from the enemy in trenches or airplanes. Some

people object to allowing the best artists to give their time to that, and one of them said:

"Think of Everett Warner, the best marine painter in America, painting the sides of battleships in New York harbour. Why, any old painter could do that!"

No they couldn't! Only a man with consummate knowledge of the shifting colour of light on water could paint a battleship so as to render it almost invisible. Besides, Mr. Warner is probably happy in serving his country. If he remains in the camouflage he will be comparatively safe and will, at the close of the war, return to his work with new inspiration.

Sculptors, too, are utilized in the camouflage. One is said to have made a successful representation of a dead horse which, painted in natural colors, successfully concealed snipers and formed an excellent point of observation until the enemy, realizing that the horse was taking a surprisingly long time to disintegrate, shelled the work of art and demolished it with its inmates.

## Canadian Art Notes

AT the time of the Halifax disaster considerable anxiety was felt for the safety of Mr. Arthur Lismer, director of the Art School, as he was due to arrive at the station from his home in New Bedford, ten miles away, at the time the explosion occurred. By great good fortune that morning he missed his train, and so he and his family escaped injury, though the windows and doors of his home were shattered. The Art Gallery was rather badly damaged. One dividing wall collapsed, and the pictures were flung about everywhere. In addition to the permanent collection there were on view an exhibition of lithographs from the National Gallery in Ottawa, and one of small pictures by members of the Ontario Society of Artists. Considerable damage was done to the frames, most of the glass was broken, and a few of the pictures pierced by the broken glass. The disaster will no doubt be a great setback to art in Halifax for the time being, and no more exhibitions will be held this season. Mr. Lismer hopes to reopen the school after Christmas, but at present it is full of coffins and things are utterly disorganized, and everyone is busy doing what they can for the twenty thousand homeless and the appalling number of those blinded by broken glass, especially among the children. In view of the terrible death roll, a total destruction of art treasures would be but a small thing, but it is gratifying to learn that the majority of the pictures have escaped, almost miraculously, without a scratch.

PRECIOUS goods are done up in small parcels when a Meissonier is sold, but Canadian artists seem to have acquired the habit of valuing a painting according to its size. A purchaser who paid \$35 for a little sketch last year was asked \$45 for a similar work of art by the same artist this year.

"Have paintings gone up in price like everything else?" he asked.

"No," replied the artist, "but this one is two inches longer than the one you bought last year."

The "Little Picture Show" signifies "saleable picture show." They are very annoying to artists who prefer to work on a large scale and are obliged to cut their paintings down or have them re-framed in narrow mouldings in order to reduce them to the prescribed size limit. Two exhibitions of this sort are now being held in Toronto. The Ontario Society of Artists has a pleasing collection of small paintings in the Grange gallery of the Art Museum of Toronto, and the Heliconian Club is holding an exhibition of small pictures by its members. In addition to this there have been countless exhibitions and sales in private studios with a view to disposing of small pictures at the Christmas season.

BOTH the military service department of the Y. M. C. A. and the Canadian Red Cross benefitted by the purchase of an oil painting by the late Mrs. Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, formerly Miss Armstrong, of Kingston, Ont., which was bought for the National Gallery of Canada. The sum of eighty guineas, which was paid for the picture, was divided at the request of Mr. Forbes, between these two worthy organizations.

THIRTY-FOUR works by selected modern artists were recently shown in the Montross Gallery, New York, and the critic of "American Art Notes" gives the palm to the Canadian painter, Horatio Walker. He says:

"The clou of the display, and which deservedly holds the place of honour on the north wall of the large gallery is Horatio Walker's dramatic life size 'Man felling a Tree' which in vigour of treatment, superb action, virile brushwork and truthful colour, is truly an American Millet. This sturdy woodsman stands erect, with axe poised to strike another furrow in the half cleft tree trunk. He seems to move and the muscles of his brawny arms are plainly discernible through the rough woollen stuff of his red shirt. He works with alert vigour on a frosty morning, the ground around him strewn with fresh fallen brown autumn leaves. The picture is an epic of toil and will, if possible, enhance the artist's fame.

"Two other oils by Walker, a panel 'Dewy Morning,' fresh and clear in color and atmosphere, a 'Winter Pastoral,' rich in colour, quality and a delightful simply painted watercolour, 'The Milkmaid,' are also notable."

AT an exhibition in Paris held by the American Art Association for the relief of necessitous French artists and the widows and orphans of those who have fallen, a very representative collection of paintings donated by celebrated artists were offered for sale. In (Concluded on page 24.)