
Two Painters of Ontario

for a man to spiritualise his colours before he puts them on the canvas.

Browne believes that no good picture should be anything resembling a literal transcription. He has worked out his belief. Nothing is so tiresome to the Browne temperament as the mere truth; nothing so reprehensible as the camera. It is the mission of the artist to interpret nature by selecting her more attractive aspects and by the use of the poetic faculty to make them if need be more idyllic than nature could.

Grant that premise to Browne and his conclusion is obvious. The ugly must never be painted—unless by contrast to emphasise the beautiful. Rapture is better than realism. Colours in themselves are not necessarily æsthetic. They must be mixed and blended with judicious subtlety.

Merely human interest in themselves most of Browne's pictures have not. They become interesting by human interpretation in the recognition of the beautiful. He seems to ignore a large percentage of people who prefer that a picture should be first of all an interesting subject no matter what treatment the artist gives it. He prefers the more perceptive minority who care less for the subject than for the art of the artist who handles it.

Browne is not a Canadian by birth. Accident made this Scotchman a native of Liverpool; but he is not in the least English, and he prefers to regard himself as a Canadian. Which is not possible except in a cosmopolitan Canada.