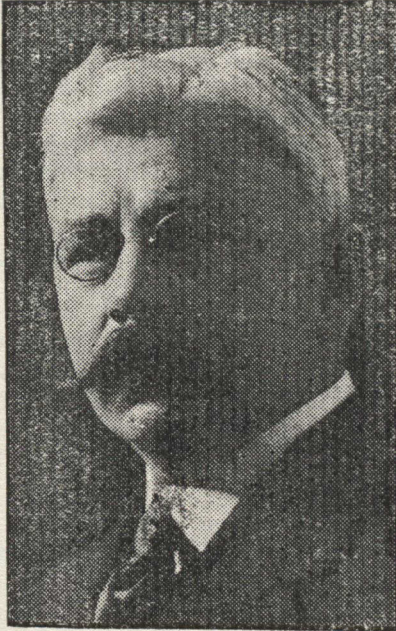


Art and the Soldier

By James Leyland



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It is generally agreed that nothing can be the same after the war. There will be a general reconstruction of all things and nothing will escape the changes sure to come. If this be true it follows that art in its various forms will change, or rather shall we say that there will be a greater appreciation among the general public than has obtained hitherto.

Let us look for a moment at the reasons which lead to this line of thought. We have just come through over four years of the bloodiest and most terrible war the world has ever seen. Some of our most prized and artistically most valuable buildings have been ruthlessly destroyed beyond repair and though highly esteemed by the more artistic people were, so far as the average person was concerned, mere names, and in many instances utterly unknown.

Through the action of the Huns attention world wide has been drawn to them, and a great interest has been awakened. They have been made familiar to us by photographs, by cheap prints and by the most expensive etchings, all of which have found a ready sale in all countries. These alone, for whatever rea-

son they may originally have been purchased, are bound to have a great influence on the taste of the public. Added to this is the fact that so many of our men have been overseas and have had the opportunity of seeing many of the world's artistic treasures both architecturally and in the realm of painting.

They have seen the beautiful building and Cathedral of France and Belgium, as well as seen Old England.

They have many of them visited the art galleries and have aroused within themselves a taste which may have been dormant for better things than they had ever before dreamed of. They have seen the picturesque old world cities of the Continent, the peaceful pastoral beauty of England, and the quaint old fashioned villages. Some have visited the well known beauty spots of the English Lake district, Scotland, North Wales and elsewhere; whilst others again have been to Chester, Shrewsbury and many other picturesque and interesting towns. All this has, so to speak, "opened their eyes," and they will come back to us imbued with new ideas, with a broader outlook and a desire to introduce more of the picturesque and artistic into their lives in Canada; and who shall say them nay? Have they not earned their title to the most artistic and beautiful in life? They have been through hell itself and have seen more of the ugly things of life than has ever fallen to the lot of any previous generation.

And we who have been, against our will, some of us, forced to stay behind, have we, too, not been made to think and wonder and suffer? Surely when all the turmoil is over there must be a reaction against the horrors we have all passed through? Surely some means will be adopted to counteract the dreadful things of the last four years?

We are emerging after the painful struggle and sacrifice to a new, and let us hope, a brighter world in which shall be seen beauty enthroned and ugliness cast down. A world rich in all the best things of life if we will only take them. A world bought by the sacrifice of our best manhood on the altar of greed and power. When all is over there must be some compensation, some reward, and what can be more uplifting or more elevating to the race than to desire and to acquire those things which will minister to the aesthetic and beautiful?

Let us leave no stone unturned to accomplish this end, and let us make Vancouver worthy of its beautiful surroundings.