



A Winter Landscape—Oil Painting by A. Suzor-Cote, recently purchased for the Canadian National Art Gallery.

## A Painter of Winter Landscape

By ST. GEORGE BURGOYNE

**A** DISTINCTIVE national art, the product of slow evolutionary growth, has not yet come to Canada. Nevertheless, the past twenty-five years has seen a marked impetus to the encouragement given artistic tendencies in this country, and the work of native artists is now attracting the attention of critics in Europe and the United States.

As yet the influence of the Continental schools must in the main be reflected in the viewpoint and technique of Canadian artists. At the same time there are those who possess marked individuality, and more particularly is this evidenced in landscape work.

Much promising material remains yet to be exploited, and the tendency in producing scenes essentially Canadian has been to over-emphasise the months of autumn and winter—either a blaze of orange and amber, or bleak dreary stretches of snow with the inevitable pine woods.

Most of the notable work, moreover, has been along winter landscape lines. Mr. Horatio Walker has done much meritorious work, and although he is a member of the National Academy we still jealously claim him as our own. Among the artists in the Province of Quebec who have successfully painted snow scenes with forceful realism may be mentioned Mr. Maurice Cullen and Mr. A. Suzor-Cote. The former during the past summer touched the fringe of a hitherto little exploited field, and in his Montreal studio are numerous promising studies of icebergs off the Newfoundland coast. Mr. Suzor-Cote has also brought a fine colour sense and deft-

ness of execution to bear on his work in delineating snow-clad country.

His picture "The Hillside Settlement, Winter," recently exhibited at the Royal Canadian Academy in Hamilton, and purchased by the Advisory Council for the National Gallery at Ottawa, reveals in colour, composition, and technique a maturity which promises much in the future. The landscape with the sunlit snow, across which fall transparent shadows of blue, the rich sombre green of the pines, the log huts and the weather-stained tree-trunks all develop a scheme of palpitating colour surcharged with charm.

Mr. Suzor-Cote depicts the texture of snow with the touch which denotes long study and faithful observation. Painted with vigour and directness there is still the suggestion of fleeciness—snow instead of whitewash.

Equally faithful has been his painting of snow elsewhere than in Canada. The writer recalls a small canvas showing early spring in a village outside Paris. The atmosphere is softened with a melting mist of elusive silver grey, and beneath the warming rays of a pale sun the colour of the roofs shows through the patches of dissolving white. Gaps of nondescript tone are revealed in the meadowland, and there is in the picture the magic music of eaves dripping water and the gurgle of brooks freed once more.

Mr. A. Suzor-Cote was born at Arthabaska, P.Q. His father, who died in 1904, was a notary with highly developed artistic tendencies. In 1890, the young student went to Paris, where he studied alter-

nately at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and at Julian's Academy. Four years later he exhibited at the Salon, was awarded a medal at the Universal Exhibition, 1900, an Honourable Mention at the Salon the following year, also being by the French Government in that year created an Officer of Academie.

His works represent a long list, but among the principal ones is a pastoral, exhibited at the Salon, 1898, and acquired by Mr. L. J. Forget, of Montreal; "Poachers near the Fire," purchased by Mr. E. H. Lemaire, of Montreal; and the "Return from the Fields," Salon, 1904, acquired by the Canadian Government.

His historical picture, "The Landing of Jacques Cartier at Quebec, 1535," shown at the Salon of 1906, has been characterised by Sir William Van Horne as the best historical picture in America.

The well-known New York millionaire, Mr. Thomas F. Ryan, in 1908, commissioned Mr. Suzor-Cote to paint four large decorative panels for his castle in Virginia, and also a life size portrait of his mother.

In December last he was commissioned by the Speaker of the Upper House at Ottawa to paint the portrait of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and has recently completed one of the Hon. P. Pelletier, Speaker of the Lower House at Quebec. At the present time he is engaged in the vicinity of his home upon a series of rural scenes for Mrs. Fulford, of Brockville, Ontario.

Several galleries in Europe and America have examples of his work, and he is also favourably known in Paris as a sculptor, his first work, "The Canadian Trapper," representing an old Canadian hunter pulling a fur-laden toboggan through deep snow, being exhibited in 1907 at the Salon of La Societe National des Beaux Arts. Music and singing have also engaged his serious attention, and only an operation on his throat necessitated the curtailment of his energies in these branches after two years' study at the Paris Conservatory.