

dwelt with pleasure. Mr. Watson's landscapes perhaps appeal chiefly to the instructed eye. To me his small picture, "A Torrent," was the most expressive and attractive. Mr. Martin's "Showery Day" struck me as a good rendering of Nature in her melancholy mood. From "Potatoes in Bloom," by Mr. Raphael, there also came a pleasant breath of the country. Mr. Perré is always pre-eminent in the treatment of trees: the Dryad of the Canadian Elm must regard him with special fondness. The most popular picture in the Exhibition no doubt is Miss Brook's "Interior of an Omnibus;" and there can be no doubt as to the skill shown in the faces of the different girls—the simple one, the modest one, the impudent one, the one puzzled over the counting of her change. But "clever" was the epithet that occurred to my mind, as it does when I see a picture by Frith. More highly should I prize the picture of the girl with the hoop, which is about as much as a picture of childhood can be, and, above that still, the little picture entitled "Edith," on which, though it hung in rather a humble place, I confess my eye dwelt long. In "Othello and Desdemona" Desdemona was sweet enough, but Othello was a refined and poetical gentleman with an olive complexion, not the hot-blooded Moor, or the wandering soldier of fortune whose soul has settled at last in an absorbing attachment. That Othello would never have killed Desdemona from excess of passion. "Good-Bye" and "For His Sake" seem each of them to tell a simple tale well; and a simple feeling finds pleasant expression in "Water Lilies" and "A Saturday Afternoon." Mrs. Schreiber always shows the same power of telling a story, though critics say she lacks perfect mastery of the brush. In spite of the connoisseurs, I could not help liking Mr. Harris's "Roman Model" and "Old Soldier," and fancying that if they appeared in a London Exhibition they would be commended as good pieces of colouring. Of portraits, one who is not a connoisseur can say nothing unless he knows the originals. That of a lady, by Mr. Pinhey, while it took one rather aback by its boldness, appeared to me to show a force capable of being improved into excellence. On fruit, flowers and vegetables the eye seldom rests; but excellence is excellence, and these humble styles are the handmaids of the higher. A painter of "The Last Supper" must know how to paint a dish.

Among the water colours one fixes at once, and without needing any reference to the catalogue, on the works of Mr. O'Brien. He has been on the St. Maurice, and gives us to perfection the spirit of the headlong waters and of the wild scenery through which they rush. His "Windsor Castle" received general homage and the special homage of those who happened to be most familiar with the view across from Eton to the historic and majestic pile. "Off Clovelly, Drifting for Herring" struck me also as a masterly piece of work. Mr. O'Brien generally gives us a sea-piece, of which we have surely too few: hardly anything equals a sea-piece in opening a window for the soul when it is pent up in a city, and the Canadian artist has plenty of sea to paint. Mr. Fowler's pieces I have heard criticized as rather compositions of the closet than transcripts of nature: but if they are I am not sorry that we have something from the closet. I find in them at least the hues and the poetry of Italy. In a very different way I always enjoy Mr. Bell Smith, and I particularly enjoyed his "On the Bay Shore, St. John, N.B." But there would be no end to rehearsing the water colours which give one pleasure, and which one would like to possess. These are merely the jottings of recollections, uninstructed as well as individual, and very different from them probably would be the order of merit according to the verdict of a trained judge. They would not appear at all if Canada had a first-class critic. But a first-class critic is what Canada wants, and without one sure progress in art can scarcely be made. In this respect we are at a sad disadvantage, as well as in the lack of models. Pseudo-critics who have learned to brandish a few technical phrases will always be really worse than nothing. That art is a science, or that there is any science of art, I do not believe: I look upon all talk of that kind as fine phrases and nothing more. But the union of the well-trained eye and the thorough knowledge of technical execution with the cultivated mind and the feeling heart is necessary to make a critic; and to get such a man to criticize justly but kindly one of our Exhibitions would be to render the best of services to Canadian art.

I came away from the Exhibition meditating on the condition and prospects of art in general and of Canadian art in particular, and the result of my meditations was not altogether comforting. Surely there is something in the situation not satisfactory. The sails of the ship are set, but she seems to be waiting for a wind. Technical skill, I suppose, never was greater: it is inspiration that appears to be wanting. Art is a mode of expression. In the springtide of painting there was plenty to express. The artist of Assisi, or of the Arena Chapel, had his story to tell: his soul burned to tell it, and the souls of those for whom he painted were just as eager to have it told to them. Now, as one looks round an Exhibition one

cannot help feeling that, instead of there being a subject which sought expression, the power of expression has been seeking for a subject. The connection of high art of all kinds with religion and with a strong religious faith has certainly been very close. Then, in the unlettered days, painting was for the multitude the only book. The word-painter now divides the kingdom with the painter on canvas: indeed, he has the larger share of the heritage, since he can express things beyond the power of the pencil. In literature itself the drama which depicts actions and appeals to the eye has given way to the novel, which goes deeper into the recesses of character. There has hardly been a fine tragedy since Shakespeare. The most satisfactory pictures in the present day as a rule are landscapes: here the painter has still the field to himself, for a description of a landscape by a writer, even one so skilful and painstaking in that line as Mr. Hardy, fails to convey to common minds an impression anything like so vivid as that conveyed by the canvas. Nor is landscape-painting to be spoken of as secondary art: to transcribe the moods as well as the scenes of nature faithfully and so as to produce the right emotion in the beholder, much more than technical excellence is required; while Turner has shown us that by the help of imaginative genius, the art, without losing its hold upon the truth of nature, may be exalted into the highest poetry. Still, we should not like to think that the highest aim henceforth was to be landscape-painting. Nor should we be content with animal-painting, in which, perhaps, Landseer surpassed and Riviere surpasses all their British predecessors; still less could we content ourselves with paintings of fruits and flowers. Common life, it is true, furnishes many pleasant and many pathetic subjects; but here the painter is most at a disadvantage compared with the writer; and while we keenly enjoy Millais, and other painters of that class, it is always with a feeling that we are on a level lower than that of the great masters. Our Canadian painters have been advised to resort for subjects to the heroic portions of Canadian history. Let them try, by all means; but historical paintings, like historical novels—even Scott's historical novels—are apt to be unsatisfactory. They generally run into melodramatic exaggeration, and one who knows the history cannot help feeling that the representation is not true, but probably very wide of the reality. Thus the critical faculty is awakened and ruins the pleasures of imagination. That religion will again furnish subjects for painting, and that art will drink inspiration again from the old spring, seems too much to hope. There is a class of subjects of which Titian's "Sacred and Profane Love," and his "Three Ages" (in the Bridgewater Gallery), are instances, not religious, yet high, which would seem available in our age.

It is not painting alone that languishes. Sculpture is really a dead art or retains a spark of life only in the department of portraiture. Architecture is mere reproduction. Nor is the decadence confined to the material arts. The art of the novelist, which I have compared with painting, seems itself to have fallen into a state of suspended animation. We could hardly pray for its revival, if we thought that by exhaustion of its repertory of subjects it had been finally reduced to the realism of Zola's dunghill. Nay, literature altogether seems to be in a very comatose state. Hardly anybody comes to take the place of the great writers who are passing off the scene. Is the planet cooling down? Is its youth over? Are poetry, art, perhaps even religion, about finally to pass away and to be succeeded by a universal and exclusive reign of science? Appearances at present point that way, though something whispers us that in the end the other part of our nature will have its own again: otherwise those may count themselves happy who have seen the last of the world's youth. But it is not only the scientific spirit, in its antagonism to the æsthetic the poetic and the religious which is beginning to affect the calling of the artist. The mechanical multiplication of existing works of art of which practical science has invented methods, and will probably invent more, is also likely to have its influence. So is the improvement of mechanical decoration, the facilities for which are likewise increased by practical science. Art, like man and everything that is human, has its foundation in the dust: it needs for its existence a market; and, if pictures are to be displaced by beautiful wall-papers and other ornamentation tastefully executed with appliances furnished by practical science, the artist's market and his livelihood will be curtailed. It is true this touches not the great masters of art, with whose works the loveliest arabesque cannot vie; but we must remember that the great masters of art, like the great masters of everything else, are the flower of which the stem and root are ordinary effort, to which, on that account, we ought to be kind; and that, if ordinary effort should die for want of its fees, the flower which grows out of it will perish too. The great miniature painters, though their works are worth all the photographs in existence, have not survived the general extinction of miniature painting by photography. However, while a picture can be sold, like the Blenheim Raphael, for \$160,000, there is hope for the craft.