



Madam Ida Rubinstein in "Scheherazade" (above), by Jacques Emile Blanche, the greatest of French portrait painters, who has taken great delight in depicting the rich oriental draperies and the harem background.



The Red Shawl (right) by Herman Richir, who contributes the most notable pictures in the Belgian section. His other canvas, "Looking Backward," recalls the work of the greatest of all Belgian painters, Alfred Stevens.



Communicants, Flanders, by Francois-Charles Bauda.

Great French Pictures

At the Canadian National Exhibition

By ESTELLE M. KERR

CANADA abounds in art critics. The greatest masters of the nation that has acknowledged supremacy in painting are summarily condemned by a public who have been taught by art dealers to think that modern painting has culminated in the pretty domestic scenes of the Dutch school. French art bewilders them, as Wagner's operas must startle one whose musical experience has been confined to the singing of "Annie Laurie" by a young lady in book-muslin. But why do people who remain discreetly silent when music is discussed become so voluble at an art exhibition?

WHISTLER says that "Art knows no country," and the collection of paintings at the C. N. E., though supposedly representative of French art during the last fifteen years, contains a mixture of academic restraint and rampant radicalism that seem to have been spread over a much longer period and might be the product of a dozen different nations. The Exhibition as a whole suffers in consequence. The high-keyed paintings by Maurice Denis, flat and decorative, demand a light-toned architectural setting. Even the world-famous decorations by Puvis de Chavannes, in the Pantheon of Paris, would look unattractive in the galleries of the Toronto Exhibition. But the very modern Frenchmen are poorly represented. Matisse is there, and Gauguin, but others who have recently aroused so much discussion are conspicuously absent. The pictures that command the highest prices are those by Renoir and Claude Monet. These are not necessarily the best, but, being by deceased artists who have become very famous, fancy prices are asked. A few of these have been selected from the Retrospective French Exhibition at the Panama-Pacific Exposition, but the majority of the canvases shown were chosen from the French section in the Palace of Fine Arts. It is hard to understand why Cottet and Le Sidaner have been omitted in favour of comparatively unknown artists.

SOME of the struggling Canadian artists rejoiced to see the works of their former masters. There was Colin, whose paintings were considered somewhat "tight" even in my student days, but he had a popular summer studio in a little village near the forest of Fontainebleau, where one could study the living model out of doors. He also gave criticisms at the Academie de la Grand Chaumiere in Paris once a week, consisting chiefly of a murmured "Pas mal." Blanche and Simon had an enormous following in a class at which they jointly gave criticisms; it was too crowded for comfort. I nearly followed Lucien Simon to Brittany one summer. Indeed, I paid \$10 to someone who was arranging a class (and only those who have lived the life of an art student in Paris know what a lot of money that is), but I discovered resentfully that we were obliged to live in the next village—far removed from the master's studio—and only gave criticisms twice a month. So I forfeited the money. Neither of the pictures on view are of his favourite Brittany scenes. "The Gondola" is a masterpiece, resplendent in colour, and "The Bath" is equally brilliant in brush work, though more sombre in tone. Jacques-Emile Blanche was equally popular as an instructor. In those days he painted with a free, fluid brush-stroke like Sargeant, but judging from the two canvases now on view, his painting has become less brilliant, though it may have gained in depth. His portrait of Henry James is a real masterpiece. I remember one gala day when he asked us to his private studio. He spoke and acted like a very charming Englishman, and we were properly thrilled to find ourselves in such a beautiful studio belonging to such a great artist.

HOFFBAUER was another artist who murmured politely over my youthful attempts at painting. He is an Alsatian, handsome and very blond. He gained the Prix de Rome the year I was in Paris, which means that he was then under thirty, and a few years ago he took a studio in New York, where he painted "The Metropolitan Tower at Night," now on view. There are two other exhibitors for whom I have a personal affection, as well as an admiration for their work. Franz Charlet, of Brussels, who exhibits "Dressing Baby," in the Belgian Section, and Augustin Hanicotte, who shows a "Winter Scene in the Low Countries." This is not one of M. Hanicotte's best works, but it is very typical of Volendam, where he lived. It is full of kindly humour, and the subject is more like a study for one of the coloured lithographs he draws so well, than a painting. M. Hanicotte was the most popular person in the village. All



The Silver Thread of the Marne, by Georges Griveau.