

opinions, and decided opinions; of that I was very well convinced after more than two days of almost continuous conversation with him. But there were not one hundred at the little station, just two or three, and there was not a soul in sight as we walked down the bit of country road, with its vista of big trees and winding river which led to the village proper.

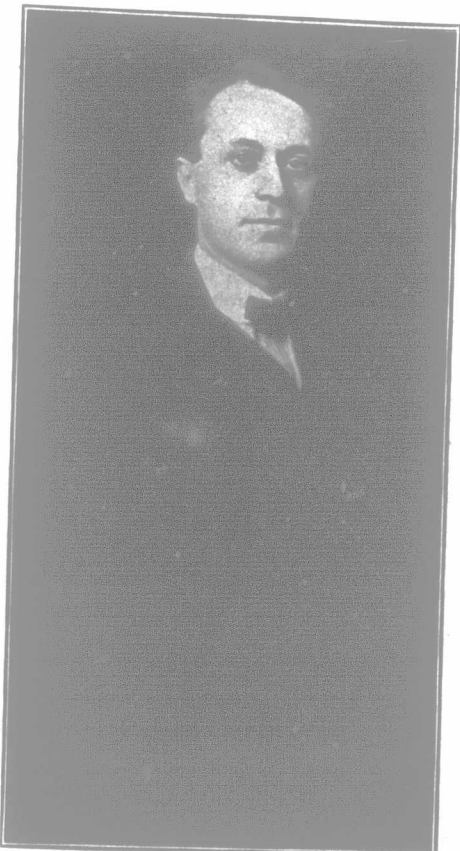
Meadowvale, lying in the Credit River Valley, about 24 miles from Toronto, is not a metropolis of trade, even for the surrounding country. Long ago it saw its "palmy" days, when the Gooderham mills brought busy farmers with their grists, and a number of houses straggled about to accommodate the mill employees and other residents of the then thriving hamlet. Since then, one might judge, it may have been, for a time, a "deserted village." With the moving of the flour trade to another point the mill-wheels fell slack, and the people, many of them, moved away. Then, after a time, came the artists, and with them a distinctly new interest and an enrichment of personality which have rendered Meadowvale unique among the villages of Ontario. . . . There are to-day four of them, with their families, in the village, Messrs. Chavignaud, Thurston, Haines, and Ahrens, to name them in the order in which they came. A sculptor and portrait painter, Mr. Laur, has gone away but recently, and, at the time of my visit, a Toronto architect, Mr. Currie, was just moving in. Hence the expectancy may be understood with which I passed over the little mill stream that empties further down into the river, and, skirting the old mill itself, went with Mr. Haines up the street leading to his home, where a warm welcome from his charming wife and little daughter awaited me.

I don't think it is quite fair to turn a private home inside out before the public eye; otherwise I might be tempted to enter into detail. Suffice it to say that there were books everywhere—and, of course, pictures. Mr. Haines is a student as well as an artist, and talks literature almost as much as art. At times, too, he talks dogs, which he regards as jolly good comrades, and then he takes you out to see his kennels, where fifteen of the canine species are ready for a romp or a cross-country run. Mr. Haines makes a specialty of painting his pets, and for my benefit got Dorcas, a fine collie, to pose. It was quite interesting to see her stand, motionless almost as a statue, until told to "take a rest," when she scampered off, apparently proud of having done something worthy of praise. These trained dogs are sometimes required to stand so for ten or fifteen minutes at a stretch.

"You may think it looks easy," said Mr. Haines, in showing a half-finished picture of trees and sheep and a collie-guarded field, in his studio (if he had only known how hard and how wonderful I considered it!). "but look here!" And he showed dozens of studies, executed in pencil—sheep standing, sheep lying, sheep drowsy, sheep alert, sheep in sections, sheep roughly sketched or finished to perfection, a selection to choose from for the big picture, which you may see sometime at Toronto Exhibition or elsewhere. . . . It isn't telling tales out of school is it, either, to mention that I saw a string of a dozen ribbons or more, representing so many honors for paintings, hanging on the wall in this studio.

Mr. Haines, who is, by the way, the youngest of the group, was born in Meaford, Ont., and received his art training in the art schools of Toronto. He is a member of the Ontario Society of Artists, and has gained especial distinction for himself as an animal painter. He is, perhaps, the only artist in Canada who has given particular attention to dogs. In painting them, however, he has not been a follower of those—Landseer, for example—who have painted dogs before, and who have almost invariably invested them with human emotions. In this work he bears, possibly, the same relation to other dog-painters as Burroughs bears to

Thompson Seton and his followers in the world of literature. Neither are his animal pictures merely animal pictures. Almost invariably he has painted as a background for his favorites bits of landscape shimmering with sunlight and interspersed with the deep shade of trees, which show that this artist's talents are by no means limited. Mr. Haines considers his "Sheep in a Wood" as the most successful picture he has painted during the past summer. "The Intruder" (a cut of which appeared in "The Farmer's Advocate" some time ago) has probably been his most popular work.



Mr. Edwin Thurston.

MR. CARL AHRENS.

Going first to the home of Mr. Ahrens, Mr. Haines and I found the artist (the Big Comrade of whom Mrs. Ahrens wrote so entertainingly a few weeks ago in the Toronto Saturday Globe) and his wife, in the midst of unpacking, as they had but recently moved into the house which is to be their home in Meadowvale. But moving day did not matter.



Summer Scene.

From a painting by E. Thurston.

There were a big welcome, a "Come away back to the kitchen fire," a cup of tea, and a delightful chat about the camping trip which Mr. Ahrens and his wife recently completed while the artist was engaged in making the studies for Mr. G. W. James' new book, "In and Out Through the Old Missions."

Mr. Ahrens strikes you as a man

distinctly worth knowing. He has a strong, characteristic face, a keen sense of humor, and a passion for music second only to his love of art. Although he does exceptionally good work in illustrating, he is essentially a landscape painter, finding his greatest delight in a poetic rendering of natural beauty. "I love trees," he says, and as a consequence he has painted trees—trees deep in shade with rifts of light upon them, trees flooded with sunlight, trees bending beneath the lash of the storm, trees standing in the soft mists of early morning. While studying them he has often lived for days in the heart of the forest, hence is it, perhaps, that he has been able to put the spirit as well as the forms of the green depths upon his canvases. We are exceedingly sorry that it was impossible just now to get either a portrait of Mr. Ahrens or copies of his pictures for "The Farmer's Advocate," but will hope for that pleasure at some future time.

Mr. Ahrens studied art under Wm. M. Chase and F. Edwin Elwell, in New York, but he is a follower of no artist or school. "A man must get off by himself," he says, "and work out his own salvation." He spent a short time with Elbert Hubbard, at East Aurora, and has travelled extensively through the United States; yet his journeyings have by no means dissipated his conviction that a quiet and secluded life is the best to bring out the fullest self-expression, and, hence, perhaps, Meadowvale has especially appealed to him. Some good work from Mr. Ahrens may certainly be expected from him during his sojourn here.

MR. EDWIN THURSTON.

Leaving the Ahrens home, we proceeded next to the very dainty and artistic abode of Mr. Thurston and his wife, where, about a cheery grate fire, another long and delightful talk was awaiting. Mr. Thurston impresses you at first, perhaps, as a man who has seen much of the world and of social life. He begins to talk, perhaps—and he talks well—with a sort of Mona Lisa smile which you find it hard to penetrate; then suddenly some word impresses him, or some new idea strikes him, and the full attractiveness of his personality bursts upon you. You discover him to be a man of broad sympathies, deep observation of men, and conditions, and books. Art, of course, is his hobby, and while hearing him talk you realize that he would not in

he chooses to do decorative work rather than pure landscape. But in whatever he does, Mr. Thurston (as, perhaps, all of the artists of this vicinity) aims to express poetry, temperament, mood, feeling, rather than to produce mere photographic effects. "Art is not imitation," he says, with all the emphasis he can place upon the assertion. Art, as a means of making people see beauty, feel beauty, live better, more happily, is his ideal.

Mr. Thurston was born in New York State, of English parents, but he has lived intermittently in Canada for a number of years. He has received considerable art training in Toronto, but has also studied the best art the galleries of this continent contain. His picture, "Evening," was much admired at the Art Exhibition in Toronto last spring.

MR. GEORGE CHAVIGNAUD.

Our next visit was to the big house on the hill, where, in a big, cheerful living-room, which he has transformed into a studio, Mr. Chavignaud paints his pictures. Here again was a new personality, and another delightful chat. And now I realize why the artists of this place paint so differently. No two of these men, put them through what permutations and combinations you will, are in the slightest degree alike. Each paints according to his temperament, hence result pictures as different as those of the Barbizon School—Corot, Millet, Rousseau and Diaz.

Mr. Chavignaud was born in Brittany, and still talks with the most delightful French accent. He has travelled much on the continent, and has studied art in Paris and Belgium, and he and his wife have many interesting experiences of these places to relate. Upon the walls of his studio I noticed two pictures, one of which a portrait of a Dutch boy, was exhibited in Brussels (several of Mr. Chavignaud's pictures have been exhibited in the best galleries of Belgium and France), and the other, "Le Matin," at the Paris Salon. The latter was a fine water color, representing the first streak of dawn coming up from the horizon as a gray cloud lifts. In the foreground cluster some Dutch cottages, and a few tall trees bend before a morning breeze.

Mr. Chavignaud has been very successful in water-color work, but for the past year has been devoting himself to oils, in which he is likewise achieving success. Like the others, Mr. Chavignaud has little liking for the photographic school, and, like the others also, he has a supreme disregard of money-getting for the sake of mere luxury or possession, as the be-all and end-all of life. "I have been up to the city," he laughed, in his gay, Frenchy way, "I hear everywhere talk of the tightness of money. I think, 'we are rich men at Meadowvale. Our wants are few. We do not feel the tightness of money. We are millionaires.'"

And so they are, it seemed to me, millionaires in quiet contentment and high aim; in rich mental endowment; in their disregard of the excesses of fashion and the race for mere money, over which so much of the world is running mad; in a work which gives leisure enough to preclude the rush, rush, which burns up, perhaps, too much of the best of life.

All cannot be artists. Granted. But most of us, whatever our occupation, might be none the worse for a little of the philosophy which rules the lives of these men and such as these—for a little of the love of Nature, of the beautiful in art; a little of the altruistic spirit which can seek to perpetuate an appreciation of the beautiful and the poetic; a little of the enthusiasm which can deem one's work, whatever it may be, of more moment than the material reward which can come for it.

Our readers of the gentler sex may, perhaps, wish to hear more of the charming women who are the wives of these gifted men. But thus far I must not go. The feminine mind recoils from publicity, and we must not presume. In closing, I wish to express regret that the reproductions of paintings shown in connection with this article give so vague an