

CANADIAN ARTISTS to the FRONT

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE

WHEN the last gun has been backed off the last battlefield on the war map, and the last warplane has folded its wings, some lone figure with a sketching-easel will be looking over what's left. Art will end what war began. After more than three years of war that seemed to be killing art, the artist is now busy making War Records.

Canada will have four artists at the front—or near it—within a few weeks. Or rather four Canadian artists will be working on the pictures of war. They have been drafted and gazetted, with captain's rank, and will soon be in khaki. Two from Montreal—Messrs. Cullen and Simpson; two from Toronto, Beatty and Varley. Others may follow in the spring.

When they come back, what will they bring? To Ottawa, so far as is known—nothing definite. Ottawa is not sending these men. The Art Commission, which kept the National Museum supplied with pictures, had nothing to do with selecting, and will have nothing to do with financing these Canadian artists. The choice was made by a Canadian committee. The artists will be financed by Lord Beaverbrook, or by men organized for that purpose by him. They will be a small part of a large corps of artists engaged in preparing war records for Great Britain and the Empire. What becomes of their work when it is done; what part of it struggles back to Canada to find a place in Ottawa, will probably be decided by one who used to be a Canadian, but is now a Londoner—Lord Beaverbrook.

Theirs not to reason why. The four artists in the first draft will go where they are sent, do as they are told, come back when they are wanted, and the value of their work as war recorders for Canada must depend upon the individuality each man puts into his work.

No doubt the Committee has chosen these four men wisely. They are all non-studio painters; men of the out-of-doors; men to whom the field and the sky, the human figure and the battered wall are more than posings in a studio.

MAURICE CULLEN, R.C.A., is famous in Canada as our foremost snow painter. He delights in zeros, blizzards, ice-cutters, blocked roads and houses buried in snow. And he lives in the best city in the world for just these inspiring subjects. He has never been spoiled by too much social distinctions in a city which mixes up art and money better than any other in Canada. He was born in St. John, Newfoundland, a colony which is more famous for pictures than for painters. He went to Montreal when he was a young man, at first in commercial pursuits, later studying sculpture under Hebert, afterwards to Paris for painting, since then much abroad whenever he had time and money for subjects and inspiration. But he has remained a Canadian; which is what some men don't do when they travel, especially when they practice art.

CHARLES W. SIMPSON is a brilliant painter. He has confined most of his work to Montreal and Quebec. He is one of the younger Anglo-Saxons who have found Canada's best color in Quebec. Sanity, combined with great vigor and a fresh sense of color, are his qualifications for the post of captain in the Canadian Artist Corps.

EVERY now and then some man with opportunities dangling all round him like straps in a Toronto street-car, makes you think—"Oh, if I only had," and so on—"what I would like to do." And once

in a while we come across a man, even in this man-shuffling time of war, who bridges the hiatus. Col. Vincent Massey, the new Secretary of the War Cabinet at Ottawa, was never physically fitted for anything like trench life. He was born in what Canadians call luxury. Grandson of the late Hart A. Massey, for personal reasons he preferred not to go into the big business that represents millions of investment, output and wages and a world-wide connection.

The college—at first Victoria, afterwards Oxford—lured him into academic pursuits. He has always hated any sort of notoriety. Years ago he protested quietly, but with tremendous sincerity, against the suggestion that he should be exploited in print for what he had begun to do for the University of Toronto. The wish was respected, even when the subject, with all its novelty of the unexpected, was most tempting to the man with the typewriter. Circumstances have changed the case. The character of Col. Massey illustrates a principle too valuable to be ignored.

Men of wealth are not so popular as they were before the war. Millions of people behind the front lines have a notion that the world can do better without wealth in the hands of a minority. Trotzies are shooting up everywhere like Canada thistles in a wheat-field. The idea of Bolsheviki with sabotage riding on the tail-board is likely to spread even in Canada, where it must be confessed



CAPTAINS OF ART.

Maurice Cullen, R.C.A.

Charles W. Simpson, A.R.C.A.

J. W. Beatty, R.C.A.

F. Horsman Varley, O.S.A.

J. W. BEATTY never needed war for excitement. He has mastered many colors in paint. There have been times when he saw red—most. And there never was a man who could get rid of his red as quickly whenever a big subject or a simple human situation or kindly sentiment demanded it. He was born with an overplus of enthusiasm which even the lassitudes of art have never overcome. His career as a painter began after he had passed through a considerable term as a decorator, a number of years as a member of the Toronto Fire Brigade, and some months as a private in the Royal Grenadiers out against Big Bear and Poundmaker in 1885. His adventure into paint has always been a big, romantic quest and a desire as deep as that of Ponce de Leon or Sir Galahad. Europe—including Paris, London, Laren, Madrid, two terms at that with his eyes and ears open—never drove out of his system the Canadian germ. The past ten years he has been a pioneer in the ranks of those that are willing to splash Canada on the canvas no matter when or where or for whom, or for nobody at all but themselves. He used to have a penchant for the Dutch. He has found that which beats the Dutch. Beatty's return to Europe will be a strange sensation. No artist ever carried back with him to a new country a livelier lot of images than he has done of the art centres of the world. Europe, in the glory of her cathedrals and cottages and old bridges and tumbledown streets was the theme of his earlier art. The new Europe of the town that used to be, but is not now, the heap of debris that used to be a village, will tax all Beatty's curious love of the land where the rampike stub above the brule in the rocks speaks of a forest primeval.

F. HORSMAN VARLEY is well known to all readers of the Courier. His covers and illustrations have already stamped him as a man upon whom a patch of earth and sky or a lump of a human figure gets a powerful grip. I don't think he is strong on scenery or that he cares much for what may be called a mere landscape. Observation of this north-of-Englander as he bangs about here in Canada suggests that he goes hard after the big, essential virilities. Above all things he admires strength and realism. Not what a thing seems to be, but what it is; not the glamor or the chiaroscuro—enough of it for his purpose, but no more—but the strong massing of forms and colors that leaves the impress of a recreated reality. Varley would have made a strong sculptor. He seems to demand mass and heft in his work. He has had a lot of experience that knocks the guff out of any man. He knows what it is to be a wayside man without enough to eat, a dock walloper, a companion of those who never see three meals straight ahead in a row, the knights of the empty pocket and the full soul. He believes in the splash of rain on the pelt, the bite of the hard wind, the glint of a naked, hot sun. No fear but he will get as good a stranglehold on the tremendous things that high explosives have left in France as any of the contingent. Augustus John, head of the Canadian corps, had better keep an eye on Varley.

Influence Better Than Power

Illustrated by the Career of Lieut.-Col. Vincent Massey

we had begun to make a little tin god of the nouveau riche without bothering to find out where he got his money. Col. Massey may be set down as the example of a man who early in life preferred to live by means of the good that he had inherited wealth could do, instead of by the power it represented. He saw the opportunity and he seized it: the road of service for the good of others. The world as Massey sees it is a place for a man to struggle—even against the power of money—that he may strengthen himself for greater service. He chose to be of service to the young man at college, which is everybody's democracy. As he will be sure to object to seeing any printed use made of his name coupled with any benefactions, no specific mention of what he has done is made here. As instructor in musketry, Col. Massey went about doing his work as quietly and effectively as only a man could who had made a deep study of the art of adapting himself to the needs of the case. As Secretary of the War Council he will be perhaps the most unobtrusive man in Ottawa. Any one who discovers him being way-laid by a camera or a man with a notebook had better put it down as one of those things that are dreamed about but never come true. Simple things are more in his line. He caught the Oxford spirit, but he remained a Canadian. He put a touch of old Oxford on Victoria College—but he knows as well as any man that Victoria is a thorough-paced Canadian college. Hence he refused to be carried away by mere Oxonian enthusiasm, which is a mighty hard thing to resist. And the reason he is talked about here is that he represents a principle of action in the use of wealth which is good for any country.