



Frontenac Receiving Sir William Phipps' Envoy.

By William Brymner, P.R.C.A.

Canadian Art Appreciated

By J. W. BEATTY, A.R.C.A.

THE Royal Canadian Academy Exhibition of 1912, if it could be transported from the miserably-lighted gallery at Ottawa to any of the art centres of Europe, would furnish a real surprise to the painters and connoisseurs of that continent. This can be said truthfully even after one has about half seen this splendid show of pictures owing to wretched lighting facilities.

When will our builders of galleries in this country begin to learn from Europe that art, to be appreciated, needs to be seen in a good light; and that the appreciation of art is part of popular enlightenment and a liberal education?

Europe has not yet recognized Canada as a field of art. Probably most of Europe knows by this time that we can raise good wheat and turn out good lumber and minerals, and all that sort of thing. Perhaps a good many people in Europe understand that the Canadian Parliament has recently been engaged in a debate on a Navy Bill which aims to send \$35,000,000 for Imperial naval defense. But it's likely that you could find nobody in Europe who understands that Canada has got far enough along the road to art expression to produce an exhibition of paintings worthy to rank with the work of contemporaries in any country.

We can also picture the consternation in the minds of the dealers in Europe—supposing that these smooth, smug gentlemen could see the 1912 R. C. A. Exhibition at Ottawa and realize that Canada, the last dumping-ground that is left to them, is slowly but surely slipping from their grasp; that the intelligence of the people of Canada is gradually asserting itself; that in a short time the demand from this source for their mediocre modern pictures and their questionable old masters will have diminished to such an extent that it will no longer pay them to bother with it. It is to be hoped that our own dealers will awake to the fact that it is better to handle real works of art by native painters at a reasonable profit than to get rich by trafficking in merchandise of a poor quality and questionable authenticity.

This may appear on its face to be a rather scathing arraignment of the situation, but the facts of the case warrant an even more drastic statement. Just one concrete instance will prove.

J. B. C. Corot, the French landscape painter, produced, during his lifetime, counting pictures and important sketches, about fifteen hundred works. Yet in seven years the customs statistics of the United States show that there were thirty-one hundred works claimed by the importers to be genuine Corots, passed through the port of New York alone, and sold as such to the patriotic picture-buyers of that country and Canada. The prices realized were ten and even twenty times as great as those asked by the greatest of our Canadian painters for their best pictures of similar size, better quality, and undoubted authenticity. This is only one instance; many others such could be related did space permit.

THE present exhibition is being held in the Victoria Memorial Museum, in Ottawa, and was officially opened by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught. It is well arranged, but the lighting is simply criminal. However, this is not the exception, but the rule, as there is but one gallery in Canada at present that is adequately lighted, the new gallery of the Montreal Art Association.

This handicap on art in Canada must be blamed upon governments, federal, provincial, and municipal, and an indifferent public. In spite of this, art-progress in Canada has made remarkable development. The present exhibition can truly be said to have reached as high a standard of excellence as that of any display of contemporary art in the world. Yet our picture-buyers stand back and admire in a half-hearted way and if the number of sold tickets are to be taken as an indication of their appreciation of this great fact, they should wake up or they are in grave danger of making themselves the laughing stock of the people of other countries, as they have been made the dupes of the

dealers for years past.

Is it the prices that are asked by Canadian artists for their works "being so ridiculously low in comparison with those that are quoted by the dealers for old masters" that makes them unfashionable?

The conditions under which the artists in Canada exhibit are vastly different to those governing the exhibitions in Europe. There all members of the society under whose auspices the display is held are entitled to have a certain number of works hung on the line regardless of merit. Consequently, many good things are rejected or skyed to make room for others of inferior merit. In Canada every exhibitor, from the president down, must submit his work to the jury for their judgment and approval. This jury consists of from three to five men artists of widely diversified tastes, and when they receive and hang a picture it is a sufficient guarantee of its excellence, for if a group of men who have spent their lives in the study of art and have risen to prominence in their profession are not competent judges then no such thing exists, and especially among the shop-keepers, bankers, railroad magnates or medical men of this or any other country.

IT is not the intention of this article to enter into an individual criticism of the works exhibited, as almost all of them possess exceptional merit; but there are some in which this quality is so marked and which contain a message of such great importance to the people of Canada that it would be a mistake to neglect to mention at least a few.

For instance, that wondrously beautiful picture by Mr. Suzor-Cote, "A Street in Arthabaska," in the catalogue; there is no painter living to-day in any country who can produce a higher, purer form of art than that represented by this little work. "A Study in Scarlet," by Mr. Curtis Williams, is another masterpiece that would grace any gallery. "A Prairie Trail," by C. W. Jefferys, full of glorious Canadian sunlight and fairly reeking with truth of character of our great west. "The Valley of the Hyne," by Alex. Jackson; "The Prodigal Son," by Jas. L. Graham, a picture honoured in Europe but without honour in its own country apparently as it is still unsold. "Craig St., Montreal," by Maurice Cullen, a man recognized in Europe and honoured by an associateship in the greatest art body in France, yet neglected in Canada, the land of his birth. A large, decorative figure, subject by the president, Mr. Wm. Brymner, of which Sir Edward Clouston is the happy possessor. "A Passing Gleam," an exquisite little canvas by J. E. H. Macdonald. "The Ravine Farm," by Homer Watson. Miss Carlyle's "Reading," Miss des Clayes' quite large canvas, a figure of a young girl out of doors. Brownell's "Cock-fight," and— But why go on, when almost every picture in the gallery might be mentioned? Suffice to say that as Canadians we should be proud of our country's art as placed before us in this splendid collection.

One noteworthy feature of the exhibition is the great interest displayed by their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess as well as the Princess Patricia, who is herself a painter of no mean order and an exhibitor at this year's Academy.



Old French-Canadian Pioneer.

By A. Suzor-Cote, A.R.C.A.



The Confidante.

By E. Wyly Grier, R.C.A.