
Two Painters of Ontario

have that solid-built character as though no tornado ever could uproot those oakish trees. One feels as though he might walk into a Watson neck of woods and hew out a double-tree for a team. There is the suggestion of the axe and the crosscut.saw, the ox-team and the log-bee, the spinning-wheel and the old rag mat.

In Watson these suggestions are as sincere as the dusky light that peers over his low-toned, Puritanising canvases; and they are inherent in the man Homer Watson, who is well named. The perennial character of his work is Homeric simplicity coupled with Sabbath-going restraint. He is the human side of the old oaken bucket. Diligent respectability sits decently over most of his work. A picture of Watson's must never merely suggest—always as far as possible express and define something. The expression is not always poetic and the definition is never an epigram.

Doon is evidently an obvious Ontario settlement with all the rugged virtues rigidly set down in the day's work. You feel that ever since he was old enough to smoke a pipe this painter worshipped the diligent toiler who rose with the sun. He purveys no mystery. He makes no flamboyant appeal to the imagination. One has no remembrance of any outstanding human figure ever exhibited by this craftsman of the village studio. With his repertoire of rustic folk and villagers he might have portrayed more people and fewer landscapes. But he never wearies of the stout thick trees, the bulging hill, the cattle trail and the snake fence, the autumn wind shivering through at dusk and the stodgy days' worker whom he never illumines with the tender pessimism of a Millet—because he is too busy with the trees to paint the human worker at all. Trickery is impossible with the Watson technique, which in this country is very much his own and occasionally bears some resemblance to the plastic arts.

Impetuous ecstasy, seizing passion—he seems to have very little. I should not say that he lacks temperament; rather that he has an excess of one variety of its expres-