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A Canadian Artist And His Work.

AN APPRECIATION.

By "CRUX."

It has been my good fortune to have had several hours of study and true enjoyment in the midst of a collection of paintings each one of which is a model and a few of which are masterpieces. They are all from the brush of a Canadian artist, and I feel that it is a subject well deserving of some special comments, for art is a part of the life of a nation and when it commences to hold a way over a young and developing nationality it is proper that the people of that country should be made aware of its existence and taught to appreciate its value as a factor in the building up of the future.

Before I touch upon the subject of the special paintings, the study of which gave rise to my reflections, I will take the liberty of making a few comments upon Canadian art in general. In so doing, I am forced, on account of both time and space, to pass over the sculptors, designers, architects, and others whose high-class work comes within the limits of what the world recognizes as art. I am obliged to confine myself entirely to painting. And again I may say that the field is limited, for it would be impossible to review, however briefly, the various classes of painting—historical, landscape, genre marine and otherwise—each of which has its special master, even in this young country.

For some time past there has appeared a peculiar school or class of painting that has had a vogue, which I feel almost inclined to say, has been undeserved. I am scarcely able to give a name to this style, but the most expressive one I think would be "brilliant." There is a flash of color about it that dazzles and surprises and on these results does the artist seem to depend for his success in creating impressions. And while this style has had its day of success, it could not be but a passing one. Whenever I fell to studying those "brilliant" paintings, with their exaggerations of lights and shades, their eccentricities of coloring, I always felt inclined to compare them to the tinsel on the garbs of the actress in a circus, or the incongruities of loud colors in the shawls and petticoats of the squaws. Dash and attractiveness without taste or reality. Not but the artists have their merits; so have the writers who appeal to the passions and tickle the fevered imaginations of the masses. There is art, there is novelty, there is beauty of design in this "brilliant" style; equally are these qualities to be found in the crombo, which has been brought to such a point of perfection that it often baffles the experienced to say whether it is an original or not. But all this is not real painting. A man may be a master of design, and yet not be a painter. He may possess all the secrets of linear perspective and yet be devoid of the necessary secret of perspective of color. It is this perspective of color that constitutes the basis of painting. I am not now dealing with any other branch or department of art other than that of painting, and my limited space forbids any lengthy essay even upon that section of the subject. However, I desire to impress upon the reader's mind the exact meaning I have in my mind when I refer to perspective of color.

You stand on a clear summer day on the slope of the mountain here and look southward at Beloeil. If it is a cloudless day you will perceive that summit rising high, distinct, and very blue; if the day is hazy, the mountain-top will be almost purple; if the day is cloudy, it will vary from grey to almost black; if the sun bursts through a cloud and suddenly tips a declivity the entire mountain will assume a different shape. If it were possible for you to come down from our mountain and to walk, in a direct line to Beloeil, without losing sight of that hill-top, you perceive as you advanced the constant shifting of the hues or shades of the object before, until finally, or drawing sufficiently near, all the coloring could vanish and you have the plain rugged grey rocks, the brown earth, the

green herbage, each defined in a most distinct manner. Campbell, in his "Pleasures of Hope":—

"At summer's eve, when heaven's eternal bow
Spans with bright arch the glittering hills below,
'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
And robes the mountain in its azure hue."

It is the perspective of distance combined with perspective of color that may be said to constitute the secret of true painting. And this is what I discovered to be the characteristic of the paintings to which I referred above. Approach any one of them and it is a mere daub. Take the sea-scope, or marine, off the shores of Brittany, and you have, what the tyro said of Turner's masterpieces, "a mass of blue paint and soapuds." No design, no form, no apparent plan. But draw back; step back again; walk back; and as you increase the distance between you and the picture, as if by magic, the sea rises up before you; no cloud is on the sky, but you know that a great wind is abroad over the waters, for you almost imagine you can hear the lash of the waves, the roar of the billows as they coil over each other; then the foam on the crest of the nearer waves seems to be running or trickling down into the trough of the breakers. There is life, terrible life, mad, furious, yet ever regular life before you. You cannot see the wind, but you can almost feel it and hear it; and yonder is the yellow, very yellow, tops of a mountain range, just above the horizon line, and glittering in the sun light, where there is a repose and a silence—you cannot help but feel that they are there—in contrast with the unrest and confusion of noises that you are certain you perceive and hear. This is what is called "painting." And it was painting of this character that I was privileged to see, to examine closely and critically, with the aid of the artist whose hand had produced these masterpieces. I will now turn for a brief space to the principal one of these paintings—one that is a "salon picture," and that has won the recognition, as a master piece in Europe.

RETURN FROM THE FIELDS.

This great painting is from the brush of Mr. Suzor Cote. It is a "salon picture." It is the largest that Mr. Cote has painted, and it demands long and careful study before all its perfections can be fully taken in. I might remark here that Mr. Cote is yet a young man, not over thirty; he has won his way by force of his own undoubted genius, from the lowest rung on the ladder, upwards, till now he ranks amongst the great painters of the day. Yet he is only a student; so he says. He has spent the last few years in Paris, where, under the best masters of modern art he still studies and takes lessons, just the same if he had not painted some of the real masterpieces of the last decade. In the same studio, where stands his magnificent work, to which I will presently refer, are a number of others—smaller, but not less perfect in their different designs. There is the "Woodman's Rest," "Innocence," "A Flemish domestic scene," a number of marines, and a portrait of his own brother. The "Retour des Champs," however, was exhibited at the Salon des Artistes this year and was favorably mentioned by all the critics of art in Paris. It is, as I said, a large canvas, and the predominating quality of tone is golden. The scene represents the beginning of twilight, the long and lingering twilight of Europe. Two figures, a man and a woman. They are Breton peasants, and are trudging home, after a day's work in the fields. The stubble beneath their feet is yellowish, and the sky above is still yellow with the last reflections of a departed sun. The woman carries a sheaf of grain on her back, and the man carries a wooden hay fork, such as the peasants still use in that country. They are both weary, thoughtful, hungry and apparently glad to have closed a day of toil. They return from the fields to their supper and their night's repose, and as they went along the twilight seems to deepen. There does not appear to be any special emotions depicted in their expressions. They are people who have no time—for emotions. Their lives are contracted within very narrow horizons and their ambitious and enjoyments are equally restricted. One day's work is done—a few hours of repose—and soon another day's work will begin. Sunday their only holiday; the little cemetery behind the village their own place of undisturbed repose, and awaiting that rest, they feel a relief for the moment as they plod homeward in the twilight. Mr. Cote's work speaks for it is full of truth and it stirs the imagination. Based on that simple scene you might draw

a million different pictures in your own imagination. I feel unable to say more of this great achievement, and I consider that the only manner in which such a work can be fully and properly understood, is by seeing it and repeatedly seeing it. In a recent, very recent, critique of Mr. Suzor and his work I find a passage that casts considerable light on the subject before us, and I here reproduce it.

A CRITIC'S WORDS.—"Mr. Cote's love of nature and of agricultural genre comes naturally, as he was a Quebec province country boy. He studied law for a while, but he was as much a natural painter, as Philippe Hebert was a sculptor, and he became an artist simply because art insisted upon it. For the first few years he was of necessity entirely self-taught, and became acquainted with all the simple joys of the crust, the well, and the garret. About eight years ago some admirable pictures of still life began to attract attention, and we discovered that a promising young painter had come to town. This was followed by landscapes, by genre pieces, and by years of hard study in Paris. Every succeeding year marked some improvement, versatility, breadth, insight, the elimination of the unnecessary, and a fresh stride towards the simplicity or economy of means that now marks all work of any consideration. Mr. Cote has now arrived at a period when we may expect him to show us a good deal of our own scenery through his eyes, and to illustrate for us a few of the many pages of our romantic history. He cannot do this, however, unless he receives some official encouragement, and in this connection it is to be deplored that Canadian governments have done little or nothing to encourage our art output, while in Australia, which is poorer than we are, in natural resources and in prospects, much has been done for culture, both in building art galleries and purchasing the work of native artists. It is time that we had a national art gallery worthy of the name, and a representative example of every Canadian painter. Mr. Cote is still a student, fully seized of the philosophy contained in the aphorism, 'ars longa, vita brevis,' but youth and talent are on his side, and an honorable career is before him."

REFLECTIONS.—The critic, whose name I do not know, from whose appreciation of Suzor Cote's work the foregoing is taken, has struck a proper key when he declares that we have need in Canada of a National Art Gallery. That we have the artists there can be no doubt; that latent talent, which may never be undeveloped, on account of lack of opportunities, exists in our country is very true. But our artists are obliged to go abroad to study. They have no models at home. We have no art gallery wherein they could commence their studies. Take Mr. Cote as an example. Never could he be advanced as he has done had he not studied for years in Europe. He is Canadian; but his works are French. Necessarily so. He had to select his scenes from the country in reach of his master's studio, at easy distance from the galleries of art. Therefore all his masterpieces are foreign to us. The "Retour des Champs" is Breton; the marines are taken off the coasts of France; one of his most perfect landscapes is a scene along the road from Paris to Villers, just on the hill that overlooks the village; his most perfect exhibition of sunlight effect is in the country region of La Bauc; his genre works—or as the term means scenes in common life—are all French Norman peasants, or the country people of Picardy. Thus we have the artists; let other lands claim their works. Hence the patriotic need of a Canadian art gallery.

THE ROSARY.

If we were asked which is the best form of prayer for daily use, we would unhesitatingly answer, the Rosary—for, by its very comprehensiveness and form, it is made for everyday use. It is meditation, and that is its highest recommendation. It permits one to pray and meditate at the same time. Meditation, we are told, is the necessary daily practice to insure religious perfection. We must think, and think deeply, if we are to profit by prayer. God will not take lip service, for it was on account of this that our Lord rejected the prayers of the Pharisees. "These adore me with their lips," He said of them, "but their hearts are far from me." We must feel what we say, and this we easily do when we meditate.—Catholic Union and Times.

Plain Talk On Education.

In reply to statements made at a meeting of passive resisters at Nelson, England, the Rev. Father Smith has issued a statement. After saying that the primary object of Anglicans, Catholics, Wesleyans, Baptists, Methodists, etc., in building schools was to have taught in them their own religion, Father Smith says that the first to give up the schools for the sake of rate-aid and maintenance became a burden, were these Passive Resisters—and it was a sacrifice of their former conscientious principles. By so doing they became a burden on their neighbors, who had not only their own schools to maintain and build, but also to be taxed for the extravagant expenditure on palatial schools built for those who had closed their own sooner than bear their own burden for their children. Thirty-two years—not of Rome, but of the passive conscientious objectors on the rates—caused at last the country to pass a law to share out the School Board rate-pie to the children in all public schools, and now, the plump Passive Resister's spoils child is stamping and shouting and threatening to wreck the British Constitution if anyone else's child is allowed to put a finger in the public rate-pie and pull out a plum but itself. Continuing, Father Smith says:—

The Nelson School Board rate for the year ended March last was 11d. in the £, and every child attending Salem and Every street—rented Board schools—cost the ratepayers, on the average, not one, but 17 half-crowns. The School Board rate was £5,655, and practically £5,200 of this was due to the passive resisters who had lost their conscientious principle of paying for their own religious and secular education. But what is £5,200 spent on conscientious objectors' schools? They cannot see the eaten pie, or think of a neighbor's share, but only of the plum that the Catholic child is promised; and what a tumult they are making about it. Men are asked to come in their thousands to put Rome off the rates, or to be sold up, or go to gaol, as a protest. Now, what have the Catholics done wrong? We have built our own schools with our own money.

We have not locked children out in the streets to become a burden on the public rates, and to swarm their neighbor's schools, and destroy their religious character. For twelve years our school has been a free school—the first free school in Nelson. For six years we have carried on a school deprived through others of all Government grants. We don't entice other people's children into our schools to insult them or rob them of their faith, or proselytize them. As the new education law requires, we have passed over our school building and furniture—but not our debts—for use by the local authority without getting one penny of cost, rent, or interest in return, thus saving the town many thousands of pounds, but not ourselves. We shall in future receive no income from the Board of Education, but all will go to the local authority who have the sole settlement of the secular teaching. We have paid our rates, though 10d. in the £ of it went towards the religious and secular instruction of the conscientious objectors' children. And yet we are assailed, our religious teachers' dress is joked about, and the little passive resisters learn apparently from their ministers and followers to insult us, our teachers, and our scholars, as we pass along the streets by shouting at us and sometimes throwing things. What wrong or injustice, may I ask again, have we done to our assailants?

Their great grievance is, I hear, that we have got 800 half-crowns from the Nelson Education Committee. But we had not got 800 half-crowns when their big cry was raised, but only 200. The 800 half-crowns is only to be paid by instalments for cleaning, heating, lighting, and keeping in repair 800 school places for a year. The Board schools cost 3s. 6d. a place for fuel and cleaning, without repairs, and probably 5s. with. But do these 800 half-crowns come, strictly speaking, from the rates? Are not the local authorities receiving all the Government annual grant, aid and fee grants from our schools, and are not these to partly meet that expense? Then what is 800 half-crowns? It is only £100, or a fifty-second part of

the £5,200 that the conscientious objectors get from the rates. But it is said we have got too much accommodation. Well, we have paid for it. It is ours. Then we are growing fast, and we want space, as we have in our schools about four times as many scholars as we had eight years ago, and we have not done growing yet. However, this extra accommodation is not an endowment to us, but it will be to the rates, as it will save them £4,000 or £5,000 this next ten years. Again, if I chose I could have returned the accommodation at St. George's as for 536 instead of for 98 scholars.

Our returns were made without any regard to the present basis of paying for fuel and cleaning. But let us look at the golden times they think we have. St. George's School will be allowed 98 half-crowns for a year's expenses. This is equal to £12 5s., or 4s. 8d. a week. Fuel, water, light, and wear and tear will cost at least 2s. 8d. a week. This will leave 2s. a week for the school cleaner's wages. "Rome's endowment" from the rates is not as much as the "Carr Road British Defenders from Roman tradition" would make it appear! What will our school cleaner do when he sees these gentlemen's homes wrecked on account of his high salary of 2s. a week? We Catholics don't want to capture the rates, or the Board schools, or the Church Schools, or the Wesleyan or Baptist schools, etc., either for religious or secular teaching.

We are quite content with our own. We are as conservative and as unchanged in our principles as we were before the Government or the rates gave a farthing to help our schools. Especially, we do not want a farthing of any conscientious objector's money. We spurn it as much as their insulting language. Like honest people we pay our way honorably and cheerfully. But as we want our own schools, teachers and scholars we want our own money, too—our share of the rates pro rata to our contributions, and nothing more or less. To our mind, truth, justice and good manners are the marks of men who possess their conscience in peace, and the opposite are the marks and cause of a disturbed conscience like that possessed by the passive resisters.

Is it truthful of them when they get £52 from the rates for our £1 to say that we are getting their money, while they are only called upon to pay—not fifty-two times as much as us, but just the same rate? Is it just for them to draw fifty-two times as much from the rates for their religious and secular education as we do, and to refuse to pay their share of the rates, while they use our money without any scruples? Were they just in using our money for the last 32 years for their sole benefit?

But what is the final object of all these insults, falsehoods, and injustices? Is it not hatred of the Catholic religion that is at the root of all this spite and malice? Have they not thrown over their distinctive creeds and are in league with those whose programme is to banish Christianity from the schools altogether? They know that they have shipwrecked themselves for money and to save money, and they want to shipwreck the Church of England and us.—"The Universe," London, Eng.

THE BONAPARTE SPIRIT

(By An Occasional Contributor.)

The world has been familiar for over a century with the extraordinary daring, the brilliant genius of the great Napoleon. He had an inventive mind, "bold, independent and decisive, a will despot in its dictates, and an energy that distanced expedition." But he lacked the great and only stable quality of moral character and force, and this lack, this absence of conscience, or rather this presence of a conscience "pliable to every touch of interest," proved his downfall. But it would be wonderful if he had not transmitted some of his great and dominating qualities to some one or other of his descendants. Not in the field of military glory, but in an equally important one—a more important one, perhaps—Mr. Charles J. Bonaparte, of Baltimore, enjoys the possession of the first Bonaparte's most admirable qualities. And in addition he has, what he did not inherit, a delicate conscience and a robust and noble Catholic faith. And he has been long since recognized as the leader of the Maryland bar, while he has been and still is the special counsel retained by the President for the prosecution of postal thieves and grafters. He is a member of the Indian Rights Association, of the Board of Indian Commissioners, and of the executive committee of the National Civil Service Reform

League. Mr. Bonaparte is still in the prime of life, being only fifty-five years of age, and he has the distinction of being one of the foremost Catholics of the American Republic. He is a great man, in the proper acception of that much-abused word "Great."

He has just been selected by Secretary Hitchcock to undertake the investigation of the charges affecting the administration of Indian Territory. He is said to be given charge of the whole business with an absolutely free hand. He will simply be looked to for results, without having to account for his methods. There is something that savors of the Napoleonic in this. The sole difference being that Napoleon Bonaparte usurped to himself this irresponsible and unlimited sway, while the same powers and freedom of action are accorded to Charles J. Bonaparte by the people of a great Republic. The former was a ruler despite the nation; the latter is an absolute ruler by the will of the nation. In the "Evening Post" a despatch gives a very fine estimate of the character of man with whom we have to do. It says "that it has been from the start Secretary Hitchcock's desire to find a man whose name will command confidence of the country and who will not hesitate to take a scamp by the neck and drag him out, wherever found, regardless of 'influence' behind him; and that Mr. Bonaparte's career as a civil service reformer has proved that he has a keen scent for rascality, absolute fearlessness, both moral and physical, and no squeamishness about calling a spade a spade when it comes to facing a law-breaker or making a report."

CANADIAN COLLEGES.

(By a Regular Contributor.)

We have heard times numberless and in every key that our Catholic system of education in Quebec is not up to the standard or requirements of modern times. We know of course the source whence comes this method of criticism and the spirit that is behind it; still from all sides, from all over the American continent come pupils to our colleges and convents, and these pupils are not always Catholics. In fact, this city in particular has been the educator of hundreds of thousands, and it is still increasing its great influence in that noble direction. In one of the leading Catholic organs of the United States, of last week, we find an article on Canadian colleges and convents, and there is a passage that has special reference to the city of Montreal. It reads thus:—

"The several Catholic colleges of Montreal and vicinity are crowded. One superior said that his college was full, and that he has now to refuse taking any more. This is all the more remarkable as the college in question was opened only a week. This is considered the record year for attendance. The private schools and academies as well as the Commissioners' Schools, are well filled and in several cases overcrowded, especially the classes of the junior departments. Should the numbers continue increasing extra teachers will have to be added to the staffs of several schools. Mount St. Louis, Loyola, St. Mary's, Montreal and St. Laurent Colleges all have their quota, and Ville Marie, Hochelaga, Pointe-aux-Trembles, and Mont Ste. Marie convents are likewise filled."

It may be a vulgar, but it is a true saying that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating;" and if our system be so far inferior to that which has given birth to the prayerless, Godless schools that are effacing all idea of Christianity in the minds of a rising generation, then why do the parents, who love their children and tremble for their future, rush to our institutions to secure the only armor that can safeguard them in life?

Truth is not injured by being proved.

Don't talk of being good, when you are not good yourself.

The highest wisdom, consists in giving ourselves up to good works, in having a guard over ourselves, and in meditating on the judgment of God.—St. Francis.

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