

INTRODUCTORY.

The wide publicity obtained through the recent discovery of the fine and historical masterpieces at Quebec, both city and province, and of others, subsequently, in the Lower Provinces by the well-known English artist-expert, Mr. J. Purves Carter, the existence and whereabouts of what purported to be the original portrait of Sir Thomas More, Lord High Chancellor of England under Henry VIII, were brought to his knowledge. Mr. Carter has been for some years past systematically investigating this vast property in art, which was brought to Canada soon after the French Revolution; and he was retained as an expert by the authorities of Laval University, Quebec, to restore their paintings and arrange an exhibition of those many treasures lately brought to light and not hitherto known to the public.

Whilst professionally engaged in like work last year at the Archbishop's palace in Halifax, N. S., Mr. Carter learned that such a portrait, painted on panel, had been in an English family for upwards of three hundred years, and that it was still carefully preserved by their descendants, settled in Ontario for over a hundred years.

After due consideration of the facts reported and a careful examination of the painting itself, which was for sale, Mr. Carter acting as agent for the present owner, negotiated its purchase from the family in whose possession it had remained so long, with the result that the picture for the first time during three centuries changed hands. So obscure, however, was the work with the dirt and discolourations of age that it could be seen only with difficulty. After the transfer by sale was completed, the painting was, at the request of the new owner, cleaned before witnesses by Mr. Carter at the palace of the Archbishop of Halifax.

The great qualities of this original work then became evident in their pristine beauty of line and colour, every touch manifesting the power of mind and hand of the immortal Dürer; and that great master's signature, and his inscription "Sr Tho. More" at the bottom of the panel, and again in Roman capitals