

for his conduct. After much prayer and pleading young West was permitted to practise his art, yet from the indifference and lack of patronage he, who might have laid the foundation of American art, was forced to make a royal retreat and find his home in England. The dawn of the Republic was characterized by no art movement. From the great tide of immigration one would expect at the time an absolute change of front, but what were the conditions of to-day, and what were the causes? A brief analysis, he thought, would suffice. The German immigrant, for instance, though rapidly adopting new political principles, still cherished fondly the early impressions made upon him in his native land. Industrious, toiling, of thrifty habits, he soon acquired a fair amount of wealth. The children visited the home of their fathers, and the great art galleries of their old land became all in all to them. They returned deeply impressed with a love for pure German art; nothing American in art for them. The same may be justly said of the descendants of every nationality. From such a condition what hope to evolve an American art? The art of the nation ought to reflect the thought of the nation, being in touch with the varying phases of light and shade through which the nation is passing. The art of mediæval times formed a great chapter in the book of history, and gave an insight into the mode of thought which engrossed the middle ages. It was purely European, inferior to the work of later centuries, yet invaluable from its native and primitive character. It was historical. If Canadians hoped to have a native art they must insist upon treating it from some national point of view. Then as the centuries passed a distinctive character would unfold itself, embodying and marking and reflecting the thought of the people in its varied development. While the thought expressed by speech and writing lives long, it does not survive that represented and expressed on polished marble, imperishable fresco, and the canvas on which genius has imprinted its sublime ideals. Art is the great conservator of thought. It lives and shines forth in its might when books are forgotten and the names of earth's great writers are become obscure. This is an age of light. The dim lighted cathedral is a thing of the past, the dread wizard of the cave has been transformed into an angel of light, and the magic wand into a sceptre of righteousness. It is an age electric. Art should reflect it—brilliant, varying with every phase of thought, and without any trace so far as subject is concerned of foreign thought.