

# Mr. and Mrs. McGillivray Knowles

By MARGARET LAING FAIRBAIRN

TO be companions in art as well as in life's journey would seem an ideal marriage union, and examples of this bond of taste and talents in "double harness" are not infrequent. Literature has many instances of husband and wife who are both writers, occasionally collaborators. Science has had several brilliant examples, of which Monsieur and Madame Curie were notable examples, though only the brave wife is now left to carry on the research. On the stage the partners in art are oftenest found, for the reason, possibly, that in their particular art, in the very nature of things, men and women are more thrown together and more dependent on each other in artistic production. In the pictorial art our own country furnishes as large a proportion of artist couples as any—in Toronto alone there are Mr. and Mrs. McGillivray Knowles, Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Reid, Mr. and Mrs. William Cutts, and we might also count in a whilom Canadian, Mr. McGregor White, of Glasgow, now in this country, whose wife is a well-known painter of children.

The ideality of this double partnership is exemplified in none better than in the pair first mentioned—Mr. and Mrs. F. McGillivray Knowles.

THE studio on Bloor Street whose large brass plate bears merely "Knowles," is a busy place in more ways than one, and is the centre of many art activities. From the main studio, also living and reception room, a door opens in one direction into the ceramic studios with kiln and work tables, the shelves filled with art objects in different stages of development. In the other direction one finds a door leading to the students' workroom full of easels and the paraphernalia of picture-making. In summer, students and teacher for a month have all outdoors as a studio, making a little settlement at some good sketching ground for that time. This year it happens to be Trenton, another year it was Quebec, and so on.

The Knowles studio is also a social centre, for since their return from abroad, in 1896, the pair of artists have made many friends. On their days "at home" the studio is open afternoon and evening. It has been the scene of many a musical and art lecture; there you may hear the finest musicians in the city at an impromptu concert (for the hostess herself is an accomplished musician), and to it many a famous artist of the stage finds the way.

The setting for these social functions has much to do with their success, because it bespeaks the individual tastes of the owners. Oddly planned, the main studio has overlooking balconies with cosy rooms below; in one corner is a raised dais for the grande piano. On every hand are rare old brasses, oriental rugs, antique enamels, pictures by the two artists or replicas of world-famous paintings, rare potteries, quaint furniture. There is no sign of the Bohemianism many think inseparable from studio life, but on every hand the quiet orderliness of the well-appointed home.

ONE of Mr. Knowles' most important undertakings is a series of mural decoration for the music room of Mr. John Eaton's home, completed about a year ago. The entire colour scheme of the room, including the woodwork, lighting and heating fixtures, and furniture, was designed and supervised by the artist to bring the whole into exquisite harmony. The decorations are allegorical in subject, harking back to Greek mythology, and are the result of careful and minute study.

Mr. Knowles is a Canadian who began his art work as a miniature painter in Toronto, under Mr. John A. Fraser. After some study in Philadelphia he went to England and was a while under Sir Hubert Herkomer, at Bushey. Later he studied under Benjamin Constant and Jean Paul Laurens at the Julien school. While abroad his work was accepted frequently at the Royal Academy and the Salon, and since his return has been an irregular but versatile exhibitor.

As a portraitist Mr. Knowles gives a keen, analytical character study, beautiful flesh texture and a decorative composition that has balance and significance. The portrait of Mrs. (Chancellor) Burwash, which hangs in Annesley Hall, is an example of the artist's finest work in this branch, revealing insight, interpretive power and that deliberate, solid painting that ripens with the years.

WITH equal facility this artist turns to landscape, several of his best being owned by the Dominion and Provincial Governments, among them

"St. Levans Church, Cornwall," "Pool of London," "The Wayside Cross." A luscious quality of colour, much sentiment and delicate tonal qualities characterize these and others of the artist's landscapes.

In the field of the dramatic and allegorical, Mr. Knowles has made several successful adventures, as when he told on large canvas of the tragic grief of Hero finding her dead lover or, in lighter vein, gave Pandora opening her fateful box. In 1898 he was elected full member of the Royal Canadian Academy, after being an associate ten years.

A tremendous talker, intense in his likes and dislikes, Mr. Knowles is not one to take anything calmly, much less what he considers mismanagement in the affairs of an art body. Hence occasional ructions. He is an indefatigable and persistent worker, a logical thinker and a teacher who tries to see from the pupils' standpoint and develop individuality.

MRS. KNOWLES was her husband's companion when abroad, although she did not begin to study seriously until after their return in 1896. She is entirely her husband's pupil, and her subjects have been, so far, landscape. Four years ago she was elected Associate of the Royal Canadian Academy, and her picture, "Nocturne," bought by the Dominion Government. In her interpretation of the great out-doors, Mrs. Knowles restricts herself to a single effect, such as a lone, gaunt pine tree at twilight, or a stretch of meadow in dazzling sunshine, or a grey-green landscape lit with a low, red moon. She achieves her successes by repeated and heavy painting until the canvas expresses the particular sentiment she has felt. As a member and officer of several art and musical clubs, and a woman with the oversight of household and studio affairs and many social engagements, Mrs. Knowles is a busy woman. She is her husband's invaluable assistant when working on an important picture. She has solved many a difficulty of costume or staging, and smoothed out tangles, thus leaving the creative faculty of her husband free to work. That's what you may well call a "helpmeet."

## Exhibition Pictures Sold

QUITE a number of the paintings exhibited in the big Art Gallery at the Canadian National Exhibition were sold. The Dominion Government purchased the following to be added to the National Gallery at Ottawa:

"Cecile," \$85, and "The Woodnymph," \$85, W. Lee Hankey; "Pictures," \$180, Henri Breard; "The Light of the Sea," \$2,750, Paul Dougherty; "Surf," \$500, Robt. F. Gagen; "In the Pine Shadows," \$150, J. E. H. MacDonald.

The Canadian National Exhibition Association purchased the following paintings which will be added to the collection in the Toronto Art Museum:

"Hampshire in Winter," \$750, R. Gwelo Goodman; "Sunshine on the Sea," \$155, Gemmell Hutchison; "A Poem" (miniature), \$125, Chris. Adams; "Butterflies" (miniature), \$80, Grace Wolfe; Case of Miniatures, \$115, Mrs. E. McGillivray Knowles; "Twilight, Darrow Downs, Dorset," \$2,500, Hughes Stanton; "Early Evening in Winter," \$100, J. E. H. MacDonald.

The sales of paintings to private parties were as follows:

To Dr. McGibbon, Honeywood, Ont.: "Mrs. Hoare and Child" (miniature), \$38, Janet Robertson. To Mrs. Norman Black, St. Catharines: "Near Beaulieu, Quebec," \$150, F. McGillivray Knowles. To Wm. Grayson, Moose Jaw, Sask.: "In the Barn," \$345, Lee Hankey; "Harvest Time, Lancashire," \$210, Herbert Royle; "A Good Drying Day," \$750, Gemmell Hutchison. To E. C. Cattinach, Toronto: "Old Houses, Richmond Street," \$250, Lauren Harris. To George Gooderham, Toronto: "The First Cold Evening," \$360, Marcel Rieder; "Mathias the Shepherd," \$240, J. F. Bouchor; "An English Cottage," \$225, George Haite. To J. Gardner Thompson, Montreal: "Househooter Market," \$120, Braquaval; "In the Arena," \$240, Courcelles-Dumont. To F. Faithful Begg, London, England: "The Edge of the Wood," \$75, Mrs. E. McGillivray Knowles.

By the time the Exhibition closed, 42 etchings, engravings and drawings in the Graphic Art exhibit had been purchased. Of these, twenty-five are for the collection in the National Gallery at Ottawa, twelve were purchased by the Canadian National Exhibition for presentation to the city of Toronto, and the balance of the number was obtained by private parties.



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