

April. Montreal has this week closed her spring exhibition of Canadian Art, which has been ably described as small, but choice in quality. This, too, it should be remembered, is not assuming that the advance is from a low starting point by any means, for, in the grand gathering at Philadelphia in 1876, Canada came out very creditably in her art effort, in fact, ranking well even with the older nations, particularly in that charming and difficult branch of art, watercolour painting. Comparatively, Canada won higher honors in this art than any nation except three others. It is a pity that this fact is not better known, as were it so, our painters could not fail to be better appreciated and supported than they are.

To return, however, to our spring exhibitions, Toronto looks forward eagerly, as becomes her relationship to Britain's metropolis, to her vernal display, which is to open on the 11th of May, and comprises the Art Union Exhibition as well as the general work of Canadian Artists for the year. The prospects so far are very promising, and should the collection reach the point of excellence which seems to be indicated by the specimens we have thus far been favoured by a glance at in the studios, it will indeed be surprising, not to say disgusting, if the public be not largely attracted. Never before has there been such promise. Nor will the display be confined to small canvasses. We expect to notice the exhibition in our next number, and describe the stories told by the brush by the efforts of the pen. There is, however, scarcely a more disheartening task for the writer, if he truly feels his subject, must ever be overcome by the thought of the weakness of his otherwise "mighty" weapon for purposes of descriptive story telling, when compared with that softer, but far more vivid story-teller, the brush. In this connection the pictures of Mr. J. A. Fraser, Mr. H. Pirie, Mr. R. Harris, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. T. Martin, Mr. Buthon and many others will naturally come to the recollection of all who have visited the exhibitions of past years.

Mr. Fraser's fishing scenes on the Bay of Chaleur; Mr. Pirie's lovely pastorals; Mr. Harris' powerfully drawn and painted figures and portraits, each and all are histories, songs or stories in themselves, many of them are food for contemplation of the thoughtful mind, hour by hour, and still new thoughts will rise, new beauties be discovered, and new truths forced upon the observation of the student of nature as he reads those lines, drawn as they are, not by type set by the compositors' stick, but by the deftly guided pencil of the earnest artist, inspired by nature in her most charming and attractive guise.

In watercolours especially, will be found our old friends Fowler, Cresswell, Martin, O'Brien, Hannaford, Matthews, Gagen, Griffiths, Baigent, Riveil and others, with a range of subject; sketching from the poor, dead bird and budding flower, to the grandest mountain scenes, and embracing scenes of ocean and of war. The students of the Ontario School of Art will also participate and do their part towards the attractive spread, many of their better drawings being retained from their exhibition of last month. This spring should show us whether the kindly and paternal efforts of our Governor General and Her Royal Highness towards fostering and developing art in Canada, are likely to bear fruit in the future.

It may be early to venture an opinion, but we think it

safe to predict that the earnest of Canada's art effort for 1881, and which should reach its culminating point at Halifax in July, will be very flatteringly shadowed forth in our Toronto May meeting.

The Art School whose exhibition was in progress as we went to press last month, has concluded a most successful winter's work. The gathering in the rooms to witness the bestowal of the awarded medals, prizes and certificates to the pupils, was a very pleasant and effective affair.

The Hon. the Minister of Education was kept quite busy for some time in presenting the successful students their rewards. In a happy speech he complimented each, and particularly the Council and staff of the School, for the really excellent results, thus far attained with so little Government aid, promising to do his best to further the interests of Art education generally, and of this School in particular, and to use every effort to get it placed on a permanent footing as part of the system of Education of the great Province of Ontario. An appropriate and entertaining address was also given by Mr. Goldwin Smith, which was highly appreciated. The Gold medal for the year, given by the Education Department, for the best drawing from the Antique cast, full length figure, was very creditably won by Miss Harriet Ford, of Brockville; and the Silver medal for a drawing from the Antique, life size bust, by John C. Pinkey, of Ottawa. Miss Johnson, of Ottawa, obtained a prize given by Mr. I. E. Roberts, of Toronto, for the best design for a picture frame, and Mr. A. Alexander, of Toronto, and Miss B. Walker, of Belleville, first and second respectively, for designs for the cover to be used for the prospectus of the Art Union of Canada, in the season now coming. All these designs were very good indeed, and would alone prove the utility of the work which the sound and thorough teaching of this Art School is doing.

We have this month to congratulate the Ontario Society of Artists, upon the accession of strength which it has obtained lately in its two new members, Mr. W. Reford and Mr. Arthur Cox. The former, a gentleman whose turn seems to be for marine subjects, though he evidences much aptitude for the study of animal life. Mr. Cox is, apparently, a landscape painter, pure and simple. Both, we doubt not, will add much interest to our annual exhibitions.

The new and ambitious departure in illustrative art, as embodied in Picturesque Canada, is not yet exactly before the public—it seems to take some time to complete arrangements for a work of this description. From what we have seen though of the illustrations, comprising what the publishers call a specimen number, (though we should judge it to be so, only as regards the number and character of the illustrations which a number or part will contain), it promises to be fully equal to what has been promised, as regards the quality of work, still, let us hope that future numbers will contain a greater variety of work, and that Canadian Artists may be represented more comprehensively than this specimen would appear to indicate. That we have amongst us several men fully equal to the task, there is no doubt, and it would be a sad result, if, after all our anticipations, the work of illustration should be confined to two or three Canadian and one or two American Artists.

We can confidently assure the publishers, that in Ontario at least, their subscribers will look for many familiar names