

**May is Building Her House.**

May is building her house. With apple blooms  
She is roofing over the glimmering rooms;  
Of the oak and the beech hath she builded its beams.  
And, spinning all day at her secret looms.  
With arras of leaves each wind-swayed wall  
She pictureth over, and peopleth it all  
With echoes and dreams,  
And singing of streams.

May is building her house. Of petal and blade,  
Of the roots of the oak is the flooring made,  
With a carpet of mosses and lichen and clover,  
Each small miracle over and over.  
And tender, travelling green things strayed.  
Her windows, the morning and evening star.  
And her rustling doorways ever ajar,  
With the coming and going  
Of fair things blowing,  
The thresholds of the four winds are.

May is building her house. From the dust of things,  
She is making the songs and the flowers and wings;  
From October's tossed and trodden gold  
She is making the young year out of the old;  
Yea! out of the winter's flying sleet  
She is making all the summer sweet,  
And the brown leaves spurned of November's feet  
She is changing back again to spring's.  
—Richard Le Gallienne, in Harper's Magazine.

**Browsings Among the Books.**

**Benignus and the Cigar Boxes.**  
A HINT TO "SMOKERS."

[From "Fireside and Sunshine," E. V. Lucas.]

In one of the prettiest of Katharine Tynan's poems, all of which have some of the freshness of the April morning, there is told the story of Brother Benignus and his bargain with the blackbirds. It was arranged that if the blackbirds abstained from eating the Abbot's cherries and Youngling peas a steady supply of corn and manchet ends and marrowy bones should be supplied to them all the year round; and the compact was kept honorably on both sides.

I thought of this poem on Monday last, when, in one of the many intervals of rain in a village cricket-match, I was led away by a neighbor to look at his garden. It was one of the dark gardens, which have a charm of their own, at least equal in certain moods to that of the riotous herbageous variety: a garden of soft turf and shrubbery.

As we walked in the rain between box and yew hedges, my friend stopped every now and then to show me a nest—a wagtail's here, a chadlock's there, a bullfinch's, two flycatchers', a wren's, and so forth—all of which were occupied by young birds, or had been until a day or so ago, and all of which he had been in the habit of visiting regularly ever since the building-site had first been decided upon. One of the flycatchers was in a nest that she had secured the previous year, and had now come to be repaired for her new family. I did not know her landlord, but I did not trouble to leave

her eggs, but allowed his hand to take her off and replace her—an act which set me wondering if, with the best feelings in the world towards her and her kind, I should ever be trusted in the same way. The gulf between a man and a little garden bird is extraordinarily difficult to bridge, but there was one who had bridged it.

To possess a gentle friendliness for birds is not, I take it, enough; one must have something more than that; just that added something which the birds by a subtle sympathy instantly recognize.

Passing on to the drive we stopped before one of those fantastic and too-symmetrical trees which simple folk call monkey puzzlers, but the learned araucarias, and I was here shown an object on the trunk about six feet from the ground, and asked what I thought it was. The answer was obvious enough; it was a cigar-box with a hole in it about the size of half-a-crown; I could read Flora Fina on it in the familiar stencilling of Cuba. "And supposing," Benignus continued, "I said that there were thirteen young birds in it, what would you say?" This being the kind of question which requires no answer but patience, I said nothing, while he unhooked the box and brought

half-a-crown into this perilous world of cats and hawks, catapults and guns. Long may they survive!

But what an odd destiny for the cigar-boxes of Havana! I hope that some author of the children's books or school readers that are used in Cuba has heard of this pretty English habit, for it is a habit (and Dutch too: I saw several cigar-box nests on fir trees in the gardens near Haarlem last year), because it should add a good deal of interest to the monotony of the manufacture of those articles when the young Cubans become men and box-makers.

We examined another of the model dwellings, which had only three little birds in it, and another in which the eggs were still to hatch, the mother so valuing her time upon them as to refuse to leave, although the box was unhooked, carried some feet, and opened in the broad light. There she sat quite unconcerned, knowing in her brave but infinitesimal heart that a gentleman who gives birds free lodgings can have no sinister intent. I asked Benignus if he thought that he suffered at all in his kitchen-garden and orchard from his tolerance of what all the ordinary country-people that I know consider a nuisance of some magnitude. He said he did not think he could complain; and, at

**Modern Art Tendencies.**

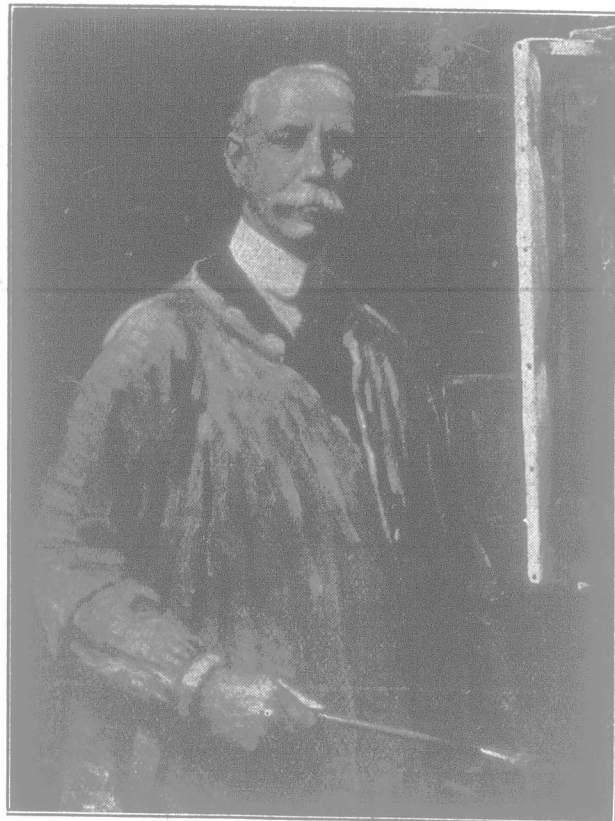
(By W. T.)

The half dozen photogravures in this issue of the Home Magazine recall some of the notable paintings in the recent 46th annual exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists in Toronto. The absence of color in these reproductions naturally detracts from their effectiveness, and for reasons of technique and composition, other pictures, charming in the original, do not lend themselves to successful black and white representation. In numbers and quality the exhibition was a distinct advance on that of 1913, a broadening of policy having been adopted. More artists were represented and there were nearly 50 more pictures. The attendance was encouraging.

The free and bold use of color was an outstanding aspect of the courts. People have often been admonished against highly-colored pictures, but all depends upon how the color is laid on; not every one can blend rainbow tints, or express the witcheries of sky and wave and season. The great modern masters have not been chary of color, but have meliowed it in poetic feeling and atmosphere with a mastery of light corresponding with other achievements; color has been the product of their almost infinite care and patient schooling, not dabs and splashes of pigment of the "tubist" order. A. Suzor Cote, a most capable French-Canadian painter, made telling use of rich coloring in several important wintry landscapes. Strong color and vigor in treatment marked Robt. F. Gagen's trio of rather similar marines, and a pleasant bit of color effect, warm sunlight falling through leaves, was secured by A. Y. Jackson in "A Cottage Verandah, Penetang," indicating the possibility of results without over-loaded detail.

In general effect the pictures might be styled Canadian and "modern" rather than "conventional," and this is well if only artists do not play fast and loose. Short cuts, as a rule, are not successful, and the casual observer may be forgiven if in isolated cases he confuse the "daring" of genius with want of finish or imaginative capability. To be "modern" is not enough. Where do the new roads lead us to? In landscape painting, is there not risk of a narrowing incompleteness or developing a rag carpet type of picture of which there were a few heavy and uninspiring examples, useful perhaps as contrast studies?

At the time these notes were being made the curator regretfully remarked that few sales were being recorded. Since then the Ontario Government and also the Council of the National Gallery have made purchases. People desire what they can comprehend and increasingly prize, and this means more than the output of technical dexterity. Of one picture a visitor asked if it would not be just as meaningful turned upside down? Neville Lytton, an English painter, put it rather extremely the other day in New York when he remarked that the only people who could enjoy some "modern" pictures were the blind. There is a happy mean between the prosy and extravagant impressionism, and somehow the public will sort out the "beautiful and the true"—if we are permitted longer to have such things by foreign "Cubists" and "Futurists." The devotees of these cults aim to express impressions or emotions



**Portrait of the Artist**

From a painting by E. Wily Grier, owned by National Art Gallery, Ottawa, and shown at the O. S. A. Exhibition, 1914.

it out to me in the drive. His words were true enough: there at the bottom was a mass of quivering green and blue life amid moss and wool, representing, as he assured me, thirteen titmice; but why one should say thirteen any more than thirty I could not see, so mysteriously corporate was the palpitating community, surely the most united and most amicable family in the world, slow the operations of individual feeding, and were can go on in the recesses of that dark and circumscribed cavity as one of the miracles, but they do. Each child has received proper attention, and in a day or so all will be free, emerging through the hole no bigger than

any rate, a song was worth paying for. He said also that he thought that birds, like tramps, have signs by which they indicate to other birds that a garden is a sanctuary. It is a pretty thought, and some day in the early spring next year I hope, as I pass his little estate, to have the luck to observe a tit laboriously and mysteriously tracing with her beak, on one of those smooth red surfaces on the trunk of a winter tree, the cabalistic signs which shall convey to other and strange birds the welcome tidings that this is the kind of man who knows what to do with the box when he has smoked the last of his cigars.