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**ART IN CANADA: THE
EARLY PAINTERS, BY
EDMUND MORRIS**



WYATT EATON.

(The medallion by Olin Warner, by permission of The Century Co., N.Y.)

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EARLY PAINTERS IN QUEBEC AND THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

An exhibition of pictures by deceased Canadian painters, organized by the Toronto Art Museum, was opened to the public on the 24th of January, 1911. It was of great interest in showing the evolution of art in Canada, and in this connection a general review of the early Canadian painters may assist those who are interested.

In searching for data regarding these men, who lived such inconspicuous lives, and died, for the most part, "unwept, unhonored and unsung," it seemed to me that although we made an effort to collect and exhibit such examples of their work as were available, illustrating artistic development in Canada, and historically interesting, the lives and personalities of the men themselves are deserving of more extended notice than the limited space of an exhibition catalogue would permit. I admit the attempt is quite inadequate till some Parkham takes the matter up and invests it with the literary permanency which the subject deserves.

In Canada, early art work was commenced by French Jesuit priests, who painted decorations for their churches. The first native painter was De Beaucourt, son of the Chevalier de Beaucourt, military engineer under Frontenac, who was at one time Governor of Montreal. He was born about the year 1735, and studied art in France; returning to Canada, he painted for many years after the Conquest, but the unsettled state of the country induced him to go to Russia, where he continued his art for some years; he returned and died in Canada in the beginning of the last century.

Louis Delongpré, though not a native, had a large practice in Quebec province. He painted prior to 1793, and as late as 1830. His only rival in Montreal was William Von Moll Berczy, a native of Saxony, born about 1747, and educated at the University of Leipsic. Having been trained as a painter, he afterwards settled

in Montreal, and continued to paint until his death, which occurred in New York in 1818.

The Hon. Joseph Legaré, a native of Quebec, born 1795, Legislative Counsellor and painter, in 1826 won a medal from a Society of Artists in Montreal. About this time Thelky, of Quebec, was painting. His "Loretto Chiefs" was engraved in 1824. Antoine Plamandon, born near Quebec, early in the last century, at first was influenced by Legaré, and in 1826 went to Paris and became a pupil of Guerin. He returned to Quebec and painted many distinguished Canadians, and numerous pictures for churches. Later he was elected a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, having lived to a great age.

Theophile Hamel (1814-1870). Born at Quebec, studied art under Plamandon, and in 1844 went to Europe and continued his studies in Italy. Coming back to Canada, he gained a large practice as a portrait painter and also executed many church pictures and some compositions from Canadian history; he painted the members of the Baldwin Lafontaine ministry and the Speakers of the Legislative Council and Assembly before and after the union of Upper and Lower Canada. He gives evidence of searching for character in his portraits, and many of these are to be found in Quebec province and elsewhere. His works are in advance of paintings by his predecessors in Canada, and were represented in the exhibition.

Antoine Sebastien Falardeau, born in 1822 at Cap Santé, Quebec. He went to Florence and spent his life there. He was a mere copyist hardly producing any original works. He was drowned in the Arno.

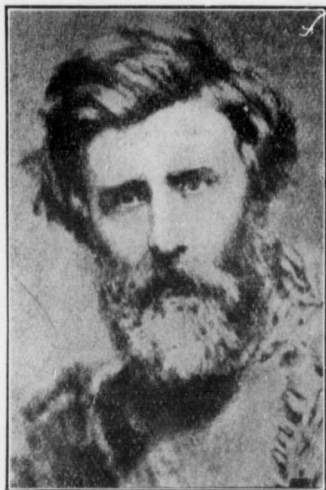
In the Maritime Provinces a good start was made. There are many portraits by Copley, and it is said he visited Halifax before the American Revolution in order to paint them. The Nova Scotia Government later ordered portraits from him while he was in England. (There are also some excellent portraits by Copley in Toronto). The

Government further commissioned Benjamin West to paint a full length portrait of an early Chief Justice.

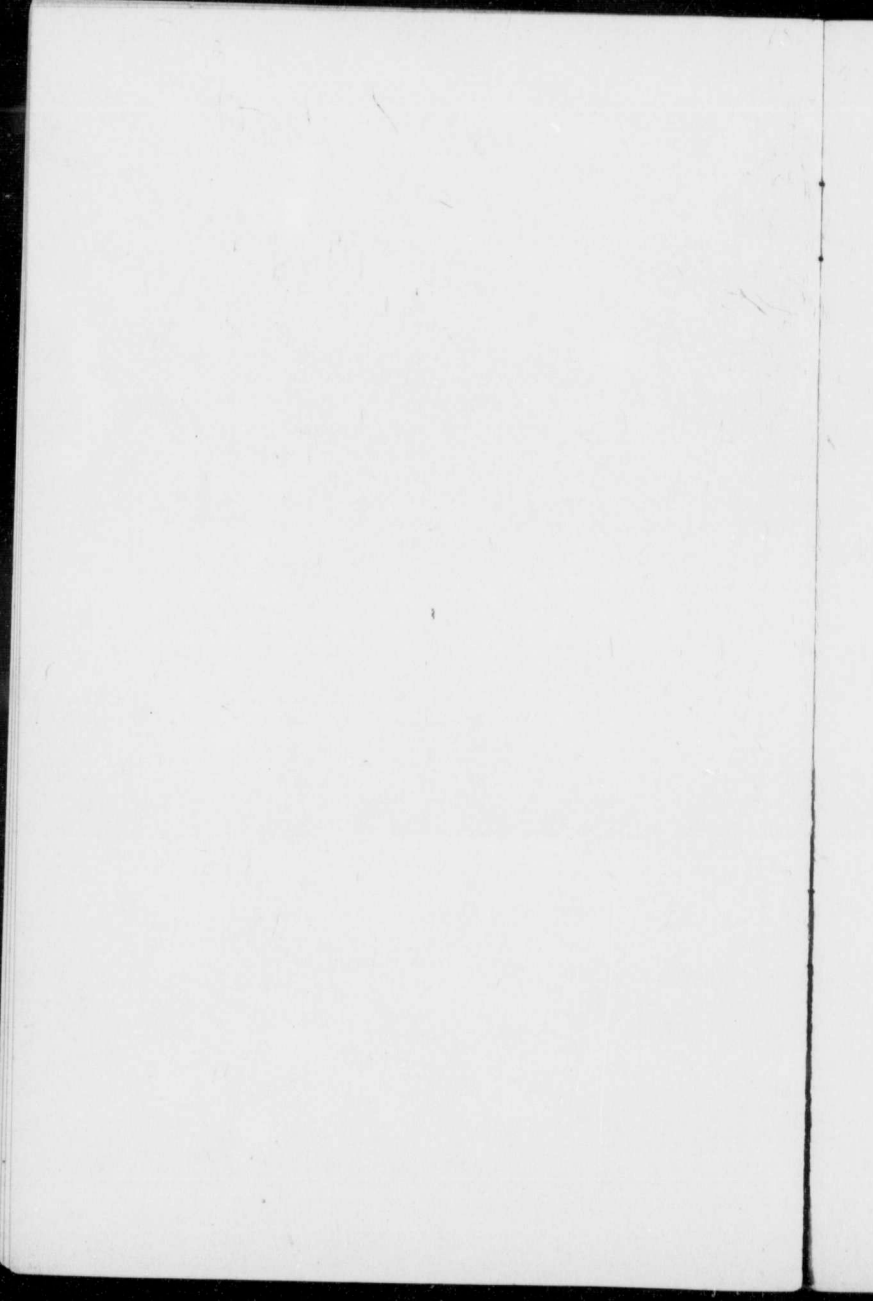
About 1793 Gilbert Stuart Newton, a native artist, who was born at Halifax, son of a retired English officer, and his mother a sister of the celebrated Gilbert Stuart, under whom he studied, went to England and became a prominent member of the Royal Academy. He visited America, but died in England in 1835.

William Valentine, a native of Nova Scotia, was a good painter. He died in 1870 at an advanced age, and Robert Parker, a native of New Brunswick, exhibited in Montreal in 1848. He painted miniatures and went to England to live.

I am indebted to Robert Harris, R.C.A., for information regarding the early Quebec and Maritime painters.



PAUL KANE.



EARLY ONTARIO PAINTERS

The first painter we have record of in the province of Ontario was Paul Kane, the son of an Irishman, who had settled in York, now Toronto. He was influenced by his surroundings; the interminable forest rose at the back of the few houses, the Indian still lurked about the Don Valley, and their trails ran where King and Yonge streets now are. In 1836 he went to the United States, and in 1841 to Europe, where he spent four years travelling in France and Italy, and touched the coasts of Asia and Africa.

Returning to Toronto in 1845, after nine years' absence, he centred his mind on the Indian and penetrated the far Northwest (the country of the Hudson Bay Co.) and the disputed territory of Oregon, and travelled thousands of miles in canoe, on horseback and on snowshoes to obtain his end. He made pencil and color drawings from which, on his return to Toronto, he painted a series of portraits and scenes representing the life of the Indian. The portraits, full of painstaking detail, are useful to students of ethnology. Some of his landscapes have distinction, and though he did not catch the spirit and abandon of the buffalo hunt or the movement of the Indian horses, his works are interesting, and the portraits are ahead of those painted by his predecessor Catlin, in the United States, which are in Washington.

Kane's pictures became the property of the Hon. George Allan, of Moss Park, and were treasured for half a century, until, at his death, Mr. E. B. Osler bought the collection with the intention of presenting it to the city of Toronto, so that it might remain in Canada. Kane published his experiences, "Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North of America." He died in 1871.

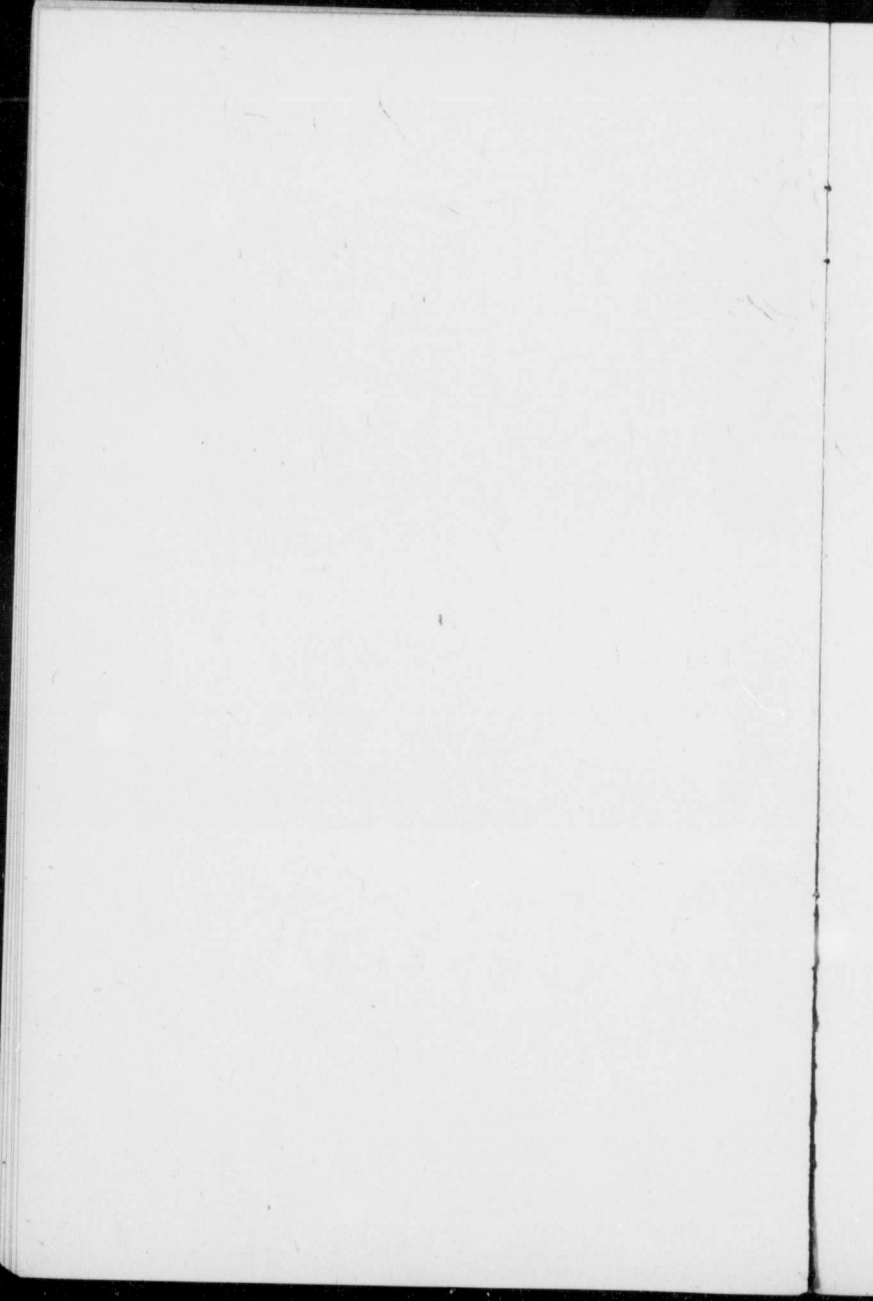
During Kane's lifetime several art societies were formed in Toronto. These were made up mainly of architects, and amateurs, men usually engaged in other occupations who were enthusiastic for the higher development of art. The first of these was formed in 1834, and the exhibition

was held in the old Parliament Buildings. Then followed the Toronto Society of Arts, organized in 1847; three exhibitions were held, the last in May, 1848, in the old City Hall.

Hoppner Meyer, whose name stands out prominently in portraiture of the early days, lived in Toronto. He was a member of this Society, and painted many small portraits in water color, among which it is said were the Chief Justices, and some of these were engraved by himself, others by his friend Lowe of Toronto. Meyer also painted miniatures. He was the son of the engraver of the same name, a German, who had settled in London, England. Meyer returned to London, where he died. Other exhibitors were Berthon, Kreighoff, and Kane.



GEORGE THEODORE BERTHON.



EUROPEAN PAINTERS IN CANADA

At this time, with the exception of Paul Kane, European painters took the lead.

George Theodore Berthon (1806-1892), born at Vienna, a son of René Theodore Berthon, who was a pupil of David, and went to Vienna to paint a portrait of the Emperor of Austria. Returning to Paris, he had as his patron Napoleon I. At an early age the son began studying art, and visited the galleries of Europe. About 1840 he went to England, and in 1844 came to Toronto, taking up portraiture, and painted many eminent Canadians. In his early work there is a slight reflection of David, though there is none of the technique of that master as displayed in his "Mme. Recamier."

The city is fortunate in having had at that early date a painter like Berthon, for there is at least a dignity in his portraits. He painted the Chief Justices and Chancellors, and these have a place in the corridor of Osgoode Hall. Other portraits are in the Government House, the Canadian Institute, the Senate, Ottawa, and in private houses. He counted his portrait of Chief Justice Robinson his best work. He died advanced in age in Toronto, where he had always lived.

Cornelius Kreighoff (about 1812-1872), was born at Dusseldorf, son of John Kreighoff of that place. His mother was a native of Holland. After a course at Dusseldorf he travelled through Europe. Later he went to New York and wandered south. The Seminole Indian war breaking out, in Florida, he joined the U.S. Army, and made drawings of episodes in the war. The U.S. Government commissioned him to make replicas for the War Department, which he did at Rochester. He stayed there some years, and then came to Toronto, where his brother Ernest was living. He took a studio, but shortly removed to Montreal. Here he exhibited four pictures painted in 1848, "Place D'Armes," "Driving Club Crossing the St. Lawrence River," "Habitat Interior," and "Indian Wigwam." These he had lithographed in Germany

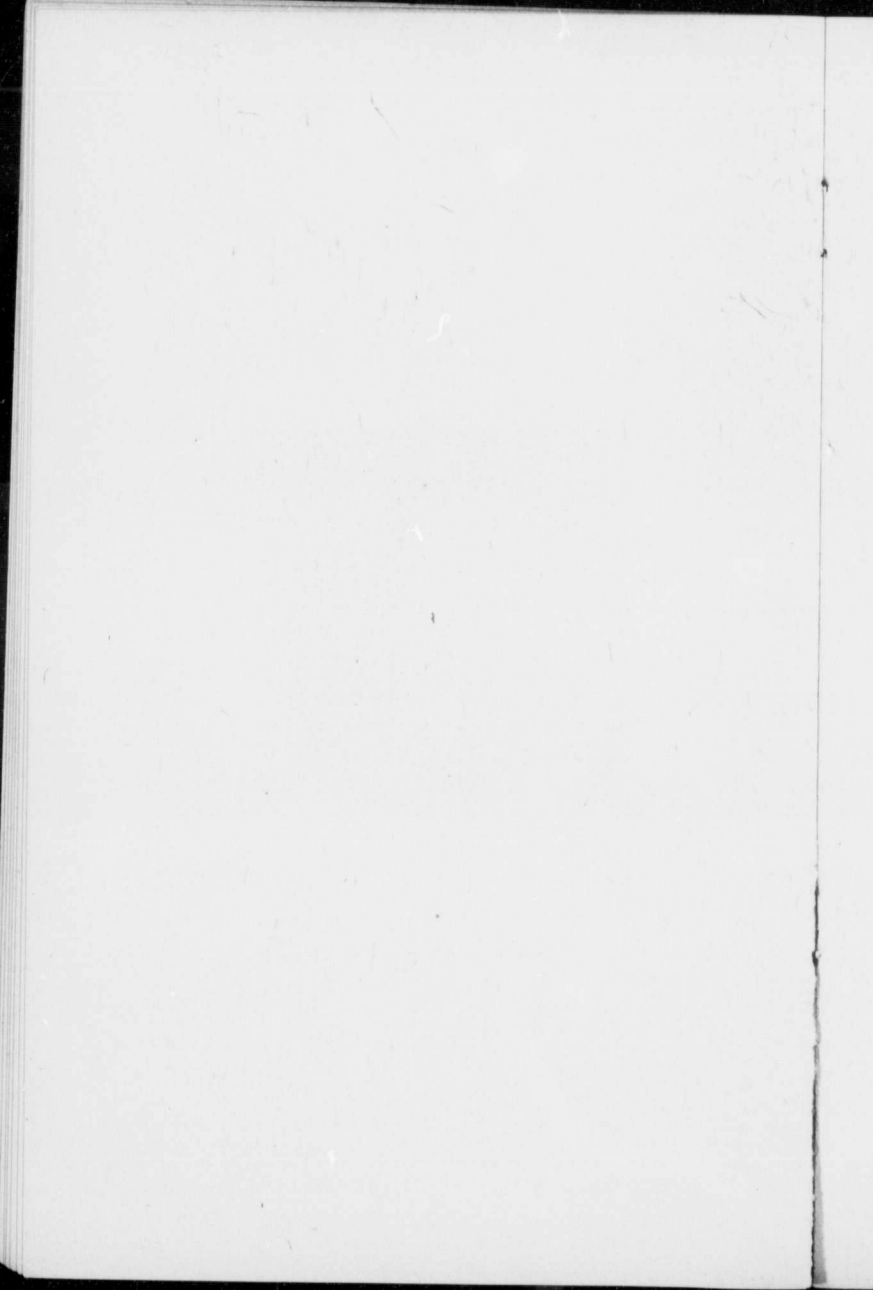
In 1853 his friend, John S. Budden, induced him to go to Quebec, and he painted in that district for many years successfully. He visited France to study figure painting. His most important work, "After the Ball at Jolifous Montmorency," appeals to human nature, and is full of good humor. Two other important works are in the Memorial Hall, Fairmont Park, Philadelphia. Most of his pictures are in Quebec, Toronto and Montreal; others were taken to Britain by officers stationed at the Citadel. His son-in-law urged him to go to Chicago, where he died soon afterwards. For these notes I am indebted to the writings of G. M. Fairchild, of Quebec.

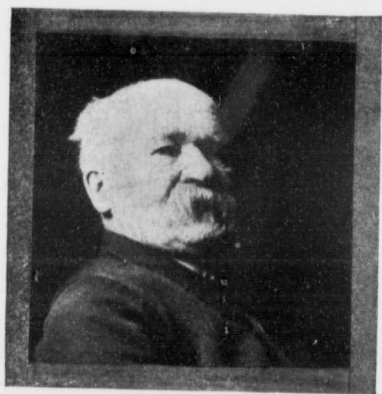
James W. Morrice, of Paris, has written an appreciation of his works.

Otto R. Jacobi, R.C.A. (1812-1901), born at Konigsberg, Prussia. He studied art in the Academy of Berlin, and in 1832 won a prize of \$1,000 with the privilege of studying at Dusseldorf for three years. While there he painted many important water colors and received commissions from the Duke of Westphalia, the Empress of Russia, and the Grand Duke of Nassau, the latter appointed him court painter at Wiesbaden, which position he held for twenty years. One of his important works there was a fresco in a Greek memorial chapel. Jacobi numbered among his pupils Ludwig Knaus, and was fond of showing a sketch book of that eminent painter. His pictures were appreciated, some of them being taken to England and America, and in this way his work became known in Canada, and he was invited to come and paint a picture of Shawenegan Falls in 1860. The country appealed to him, and he remained painting landscapes, noted for their color quality. There was in the exhibition a full range of his pictures from the time he worked in Europe to his latter years. When the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts was formed he was chosen one of the foundation members by the Marquis of Lorne, and in 1890 was elected president. He lived many years in Toronto,

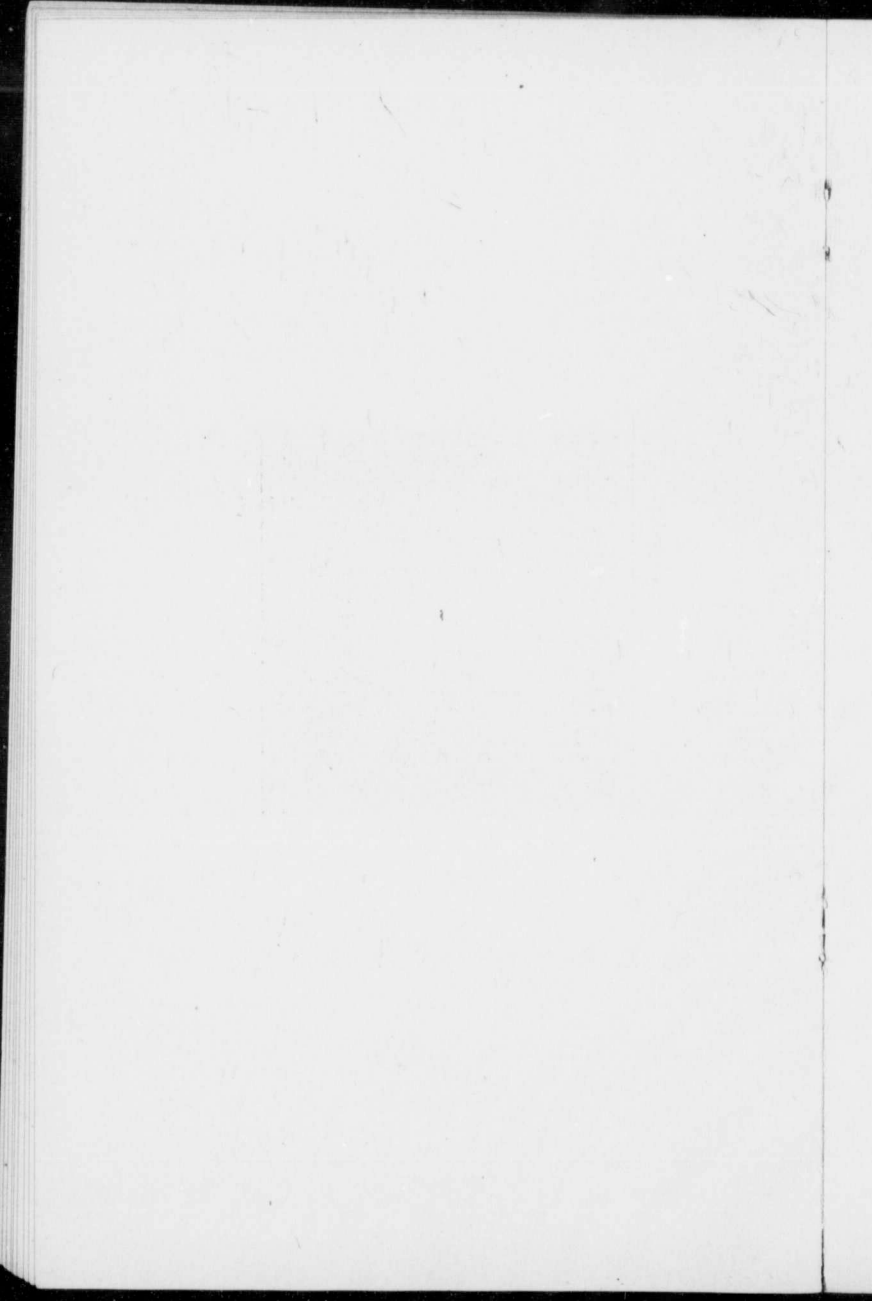


CORNELIUS KREIGHOFF.



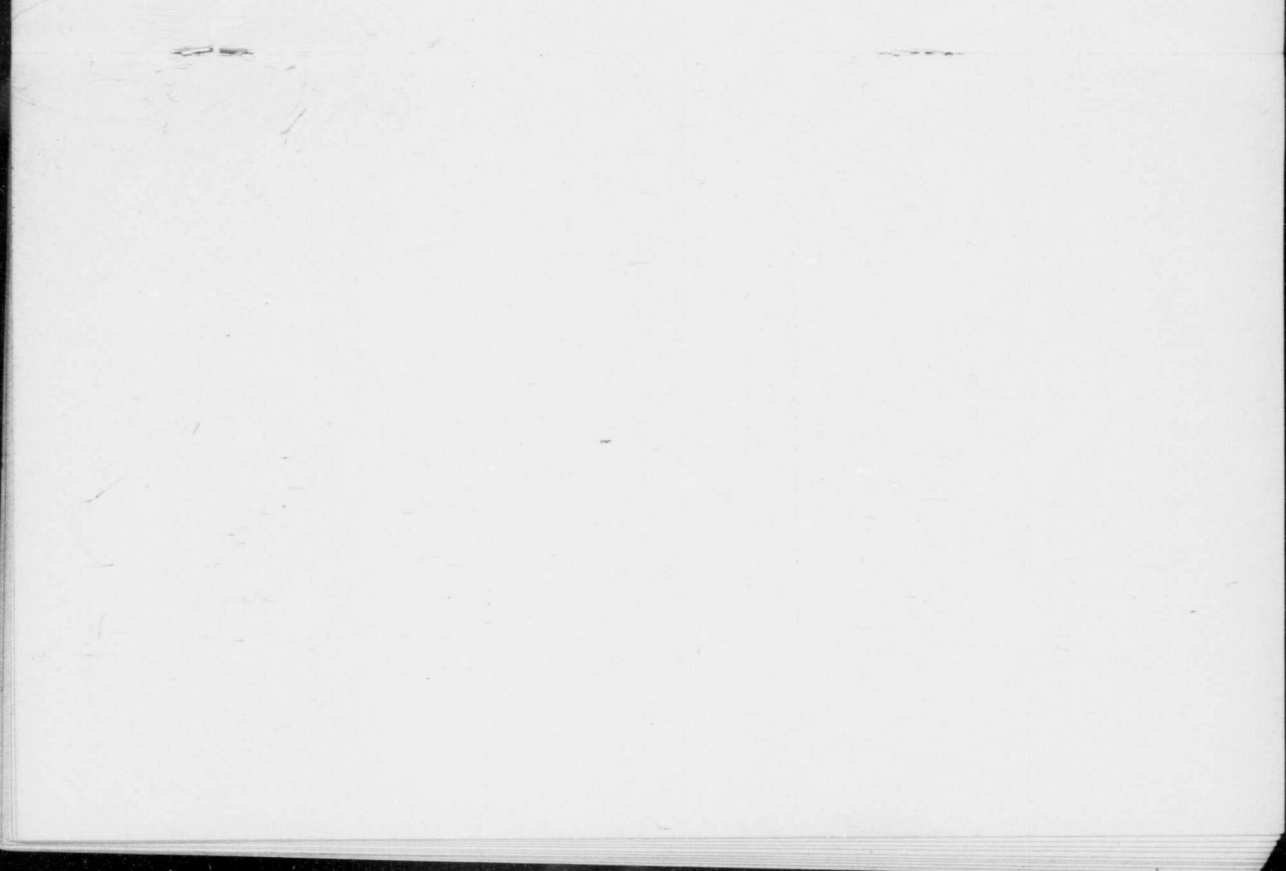


OTTO R. JACOBI.





HENRY PERRE.



and afterwards joined his son, a rancher in Taiva in the Western States, where he died.

Henry Perré, born at Strassburg, Alsace, of French and Prussian descent, studied art in Dresden. Like Wagner, the great composer, he threw himself into the rise of Saxony, and at the close of the war, fearing the consequences, he fled to the United States. Later, the Civil War breaking out, he joined the Confederate Army, and when peace was restored, went to Cincinnati and resumed his work painting "gems," as he expressed it. He then went to Chicago, and later came to Canada, spending his time between Toronto and Montreal. Though Perré had been twice through the wars, when disputes rose high in an art society of which he was a member, he would, on tip-toe, leave the room and remain seated in the hall till peace was restored. He painted seldom, justifying himself with the usual exclamation: "What's the use!" He led a lonely bachelor life, his only companion his little dog "Money," which he had attributed with saving his life in a fire in Montreal. Perré was a charter member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, and of the Ontario Society of Artists. He died at Toronto in 1890, aged about 62. These notes are from his friend William Cruikshank, R.C.A.

In connection with these Europeans who came to Canada, it may be of interest to note that the father of the celebrated painter, Gari Melchers, of Vienna, lived in Toronto. His name was Julius Theodore Melchers, a native of Germany. He carved ornaments for Osgoode Hall, and removed to Detroit shortly before the birth of his son. Gari Melchers told me his heart still warms whenever he thinks of Toronto.

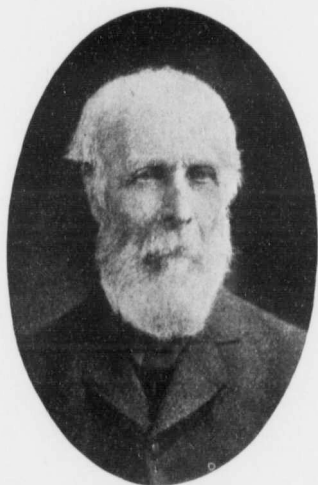
THE WATER COLOR PAINTERS

Besides the group of European artists who adopted Canada as their home, Fowler, Fraser and other painters came from England, and some native painters, also now deceased, came to the front, Edson, Sandham and O'Brien.

In 1872 the Ontario Society of Artists was formed in Toronto, and in 1879 the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts was incorporated, holding its exhibitions in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and other cities. In Montreal as early as 1826 there was a sort of art society. Other attempts followed, and in 1847, the Montreal Society of Artists held a regular exhibition. In 1867 the Society of Canadian Artists was formed and incorporated in 1870, but this ceased, and the Art Association of Montreal started in 1870 by a number of laymen, is the only art organization in that city at the present time.

Daniel Fowler, R.C.A. (1810-1894), born at Down, Kent, England, studied law, but on the death of his father chose his own path and entered the studio of J. D. Harding, the English water color painter. He spent a year on the continent, and made many sketches which he used in later life. He took a studio in London, and worked there until ill health forced him to come to Canada, and he lived for fifty-one years on the Island of Amherst, in the St. Lawrence River, near Kingston. Though for the first fourteen years he led an out-door life and ceased to paint, a visit to London revived his old desire, and in 1857 he began sending his pictures to the Provincial Exhibitions, Medal Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, and World's Fair, Chicago. His subjects range from landscape to still life. His pictures of dead game are vigorous and strong in color. He left an M.S. autobiography.

John A. Fraser, R.C.A. (1838-1897). Born in London, England. Began studying art early and came to Canada in 1860. He lived in Montreal, where he took part in the formation of the Society of Canadian Artists. In 1868 he came to Toronto and with others assisted in organizing the Ontario Society of Artists, of which he was

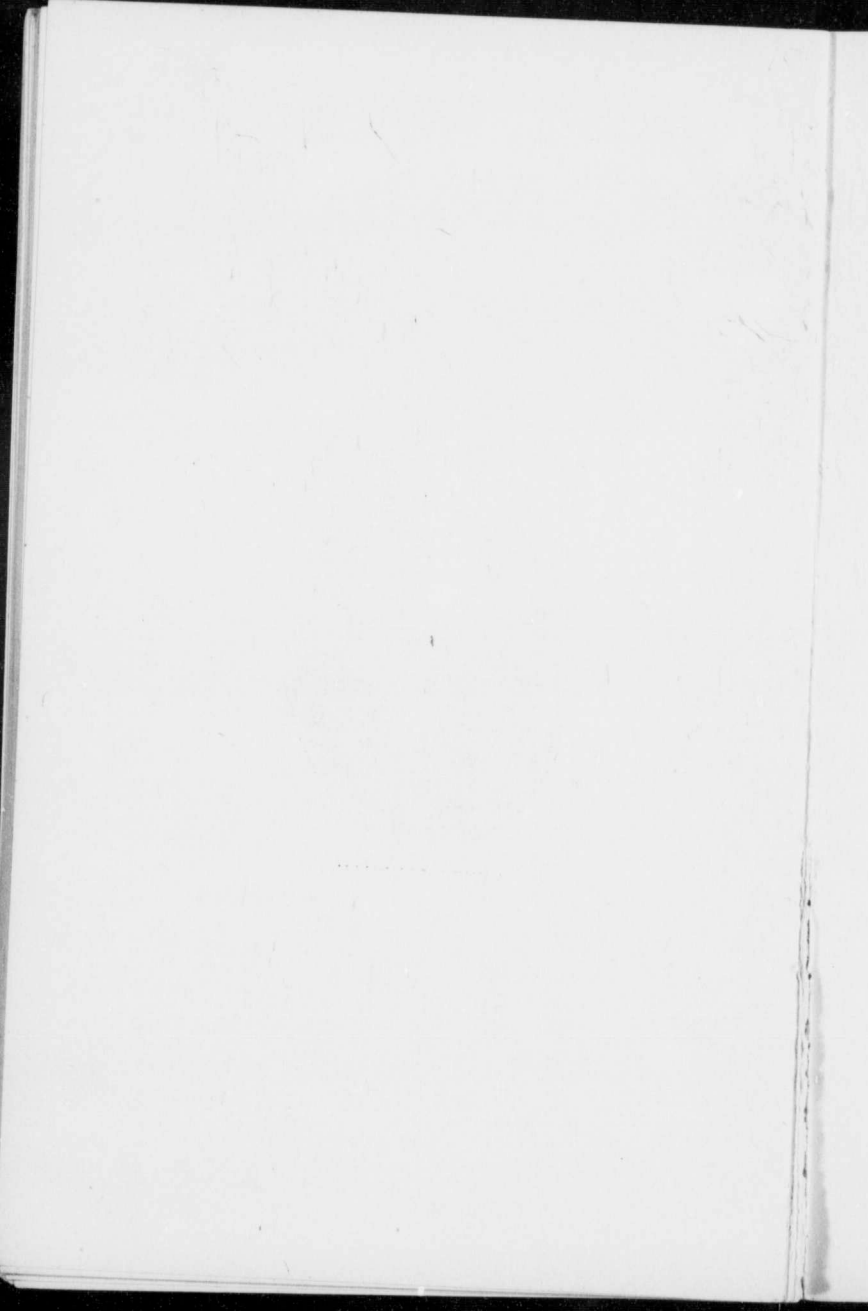


DANIEL FOWLER.





HENRY SANDHAM.





LUCIUS O'BRIEN.



first Vice-President. Afterwards he lived in Chicago and Boston. In 1886 he visited the Rocky Mountains and painted a number of pictures. Two years later he worked in England and Scotland and exhibited at the Royal Academy. After this he moved to New York, and continued to work there until his death. He was a member of the American Water Color Society, and the New York Water Color Club. In 1891 he exhibited at the Salon and obtained a medal at the World's Fair, Chicago.

Henry Sandham, R.C.A. (1842-1910). Born at Montreal. Began his art studies under Fraser, Vogt and Jacobi. Later he went to Europe to complete his course. In 1880 he settled in Boston. He illustrated for the American magazines, the "Century," "Scribner's," "Harp-er's," etc., and also painted in oil and water colors. Some of his water color figure groups are most skilfully handled. He was an excellent draughtsman. His portrait in oils of Sir John Macdonald is in the Parliament Buildings, Ot-tawa, but he apparently had not the same knowledge of this medium as water color. His "Dawn of Liberty" is in the town hall of Lexington, Massachusetts, and the "March of Time" is in Washington. He was a charter member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

Allen A. Edson, R.C.A. (1846-1888). Born at Stan-bridge, Quebec, of American descent. In 1861 his family moved to Montreal, and at the age of eighteen he crossed the Atlantic and studied art for two years. Again he visited Europe, and after a year returned with many sketches which were quickly bought up. A third visit was spent in England and Scotland, then he spent five years in France as a pupil of Pelouse at Cerney La Ville, and became a friend of that master. He exhibited at the Royal Academy, the Salon, the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, of which he was a charter member, and the Ontario Society of Artists. Princess Louise presented two of his pictures to the late Queen Victoria.

Henri Julien of Montreal (1846-1908). A French Canadian born in Quebec, known chiefly as an illustrator,

though he painted in oil and water colors. His pictures represent the life of the habitant and are full of character. He accompanied the Red River expedition of 1871 as illustrator. For over twenty years he was chief illustrator of the Montreal Star, and during this period made sketches of the Ottawa politicians. Hebert, the sculptor, said of him "he was a good artist and a fine comrade."

Lucius O'Brien, R.C.A. (1832-1900). Born at Shanty Bay, Ontario, of Irish descent, and began the practice of painting late in life. When the Ontario Society of Artists was formed he became a member, and the following year was elected Vice-President, acting as such until 1880, when he was appointed President of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, a position he held for ten years, being succeeded by O. R. Jacobi. The late Queen Victoria commissioned him to paint two pictures of Quebec; the Marquis of Lorne also patronized him. His "Sunrise on the Saguenay" is in the National Gallery, Ottawa, and "Mist in the Mountain" in the Parliament Buildings, Toronto. What knowledge he had of painting O'Brien taught himself, and even when old showed a desire to learn more.

It will be seen that these men, unlike the European painters named, were mainly water colorists, and their point of view had certain influence at the time.



BENONI IRWIN.



PAINTERS WHO LIVED ABROAD

Other native painters, now deceased, had gone to France to study art, and remaining abroad won European reputations. The most prominent were Wyatt Eaton, Blair Bruce and Paul Peel, and their pictures mark an advance in Canadian art; for though they lived abroad they kept in touch with Canada, and some of their pictures are in the country.

Benoni Irwin, a Canadian portrait painter of English descent, lived at Newmarket, Ont., and began his art studies in Toronto. About 1866 he went to New York and became a pupil in the National Academy of Design. He then took a course in Paris and Italy, remaining abroad for five years. Returning to America, he took a studio in New York. At Salt Lake City, he painted Brigham Young and his five wives, and later lived in Baltimore and San Francisco. He exhibited in the Salon, and his "Study in Brown" was shown in the World's Fair, Chicago. He came to a tragic end, being accidentally drowned while boating on the Hudson about 1892.

Wyatt Eaton (1849-1896). Born at Phillipsburg, Lake Champlain, Quebec. At the age of eighteen he entered the National Academy of Design, New York, where he spent five years, and, after a season in London, entered the Atelier of Gerome at the Beaux Arts, Paris, in 1870. He spent his summers in the forest of Fontainebleau, and at Barbizon he became a friend of Millet. This period of his life is described in his "Recollections of J. F. Millet," written for the Century Magazine. About this time "The Reverie," "Harvesters at Rest" and the "Portrait of an Old Lady," exhibited at the Salon made him known.

After leaving Gerome's Atelier he became a pupil of Whistler, but the influence was not felt. The only Canadian artists whose work is akin to the paintings of this master are James Wilson Morrice and Clarence Gagnon.

Returning to New York he made for the Century Magazine, 1873, his series of crayon portraits of the great poets then living—Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes,

Emerson and others, which Mr. Timothy Cole engraved, and from this time he took his place as a portrait painter. He also took active part in forming the American Art Association. Its object was to "down" the old Academy, which wanted to suppress newcomers. Besides Eaton, St. Gaudens, Shirlaw and Gilder, who took the initiative, and his wife were in this movement, and they won in the end, though not without toil on the part of all the members. Before they were incorporated Kurz took their name for his exhibition and auction room, and they then called themselves the Society of American Artists.

Eaton aimed to give prominence to the principal fact of a character, the real form of the head and the life that issued from the eyes, keeping everything subordinate to this. He felt more in sympathy with sculpture and liked most of all bare nature—the human form, effects of light and atmosphere. He had a wish to paint the nude and ideal subjects, but found it necessary to teach, and had the life classes at the Cooper Union and a private class in his studio.

His finest portrait is one of Mrs. Gilder, widow of the late Richard Watson Gilder, poet and editor of the Century Magazine, who was a particular friend of Eaton's. He was also an excellent pen and ink draughtsman, as is evident from his drawings in the Century Magazine.

In 1883 he again visited France and Barbizon, but his friend Millet was no more, and from there he went to Italy and in 1885, while in Florence, painted a portrait of Mr. Timothy Cole, the engraver. This was much exhibited under the title "Man with Violin."

In 1892 he was called to Montreal to paint a portrait of Sir William Dawson for McGill University. Other commissions followed, Lord Strathcona, Sir William and Lady Van Horne, R. B. Angus, Sir William Macdonald, Lord Mount Stephen, and Lady Marjorie Gordon, but his health, which was never robust, gave way. He went to Italy where his hopes revived, but, after a short stay in



BLAIR BRUCE.





PAUL PEEL.



London, he returned to America to die. This occurred at Newport, Rhode Island.

W. Blair Bruce (1859-1906). Was born at Hamilton, Ontario, of Scotch descent. He had to enter an architect's office, and studied art in the Hamilton Art School, and in 1881 went to France, and entered the Academy Julien under Tony Robert Fleury, and Bougereau.

He spent most of his time between Paris and Denmark. Although Bruce loved the north, and worked in Sweden, and painted the ice and snow, he was attracted to the Mediterranean, returning with impressions of Mentone and Venice. He had a studio in Paris and spent some months each year there.

His picture "The Bathers, Mediterranean," was exhibited in Toronto after his death, and one of his noted pictures "The Forgers" was recently purchased by the Dominion Art Commission for the National Gallery, Ottawa. This picture is a perfect reality though Bruce was too much of a poet to be brutally realistic. The canvas vibrates with the effect of light and heat and the swing and action of the figures is fine. Some of his pictures are big compositions of nude figures, clouds and sky; others clear delicious marines and landscapes. These pictures have a brilliancy which will keep in spite of years. Bruce sometimes returned to Canada. He wished to show his work here, and sent many of his pictures, but the ship was wrecked and the shock of this loss for a time impaired the painter's health. He was an active athletic man, and died of an athlete's heart. His widow organized a retrospective exhibition of his works at the George Petit Galleries, Paris, in 1907; 122 of his works were shown.

Paul Peel, R.C.A. (1860-1892). Born in London, Ontario, and died at Paris. In 1877 he went to Philadelphia, and spent three years at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. In 1880 he went to London and entered the Royal Academy. In the following year he took up his studies in Paris under Gerome, Lefevre, Boulanger and

Constant, remaining under the latter master for nearly five years. When he called on Gerome, the work he showed that master was a portrait of himself. Gerome was amused, and said it was not often a student brought his model with him. In 1889 his picture "Life is Bitter," was awarded honorable mention at the Salon. He excelled in painting the nude, and the next year his picture "After the Bath" won a third class medal.

An incident told to me by Frank Vincent Du Mond, the American painter, who received the same honor, shows how much this picture of Peel's was appreciated. He was very nervous when he approached the table where the masters were seated, which was visibly increased when good old Jules Breton, who had great admiration for the picture, kissed Peel on both cheeks as he placed the medal on his breast.

"After the Bath" was purchased by the Hungarian Government. An American offered a larger sum, but the painter preferred it to go to a National Gallery. It represents the slender nude figures of his children in front of a fire. Peel spent his time between Paris and Copenhagen, for, like Bruce, he had married a Danish lady. Queen Alexandra bought his "Boy and Dog." He came to Canada in 1890 and held a sale of his pictures in Toronto. He was cut off in youth, while still dreaming "he would do something worth while yet."

Since the time of these painters important changes have taken place. A Dominion Art Commission has been appointed. The National Gallery at Ottawa which was originated by the Royal Canadian Academy has been reorganized. The Toronto Art Museum founded, and the Canadian Art Club founded in Toronto in 1907, was incorporated in 1909. Its membership consists of a number of painters and sculptors, Canadian by birth or adoption, irrespective of their place of residence.