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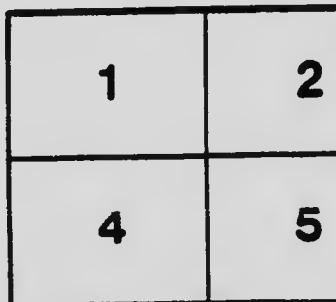
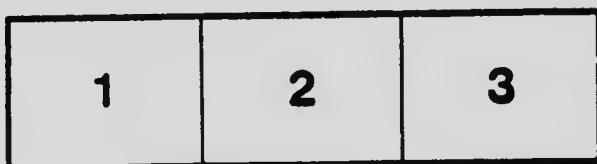
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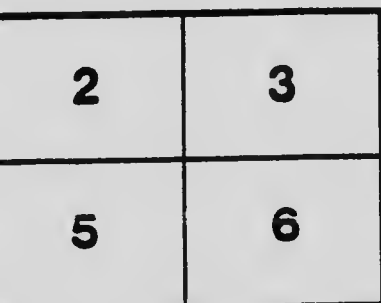
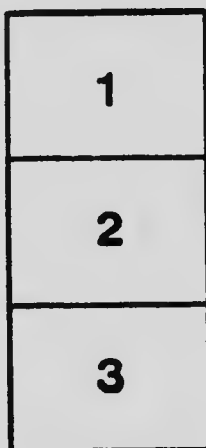
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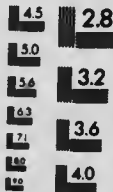
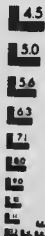
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*Monseigneur the Vice-Rector, (1) the  
Honourable Representative of His  
Excellency the Governor-General,  
(2) Ladies and Gentlemen:*

I would preface the remarks I am about to make, by saying that I feel it a great honour bestowed upon me by the faculty of this great Institution of Learning, to be invited to speak before this distinguished company upon the subject of Art and the collection of paintings at Laval.

As an artist and student of Art, engaged for many years in many of the principal Galleries of Great Britain and other European countries, the United States, as well as several here in Canada, I have felt a peculiar interest and satisfaction in finding in this collection, so many masterpieces—works of the greatest value.

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(1) Mgr O.-E. Mathieu, C.M.G.

(2) Sir Charles Fitzpatrick, judge-in-chief of the Supreme Court of Canada.

I had heard a great deal about this collection and was impatient for the time to arrive when I might be permitted to see and critically study the works contained in it.

During a period of some three years of intermittent application, I have been enabled to form a pretty fair idea of what may be considered a just estimate of this most interesting and valuable collection.

The result of my study and research has been embodied in the New Catalogue de luxe published specially for the grand Tercentenary celebrations last July under the auspices of the University, and, in this work, reference is made to over two hundred paintings that I identified which hitherto had remained unidentified (incorrectly ascribed).

Both Monseigneur Laflamme and Monseigneur Mathieu have evinced the very deepest interest in the work I undertook to carry out, and are pleased to acknowledge that it has been a success, especially the work of restoring the celebrated Altar-piece, "La Sainte

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Famille," and that of "the Vision of Saint Anthony." This success has been very largely due to the patience and the encouragement given to me by the Reverend Gentlemen, for it was not only difficult work, but the nature of it made it necessarily slow.

A university containing so many original masterpieces as Laval does, and by masters of such great names, has every reason to be justly proud. Moreover, Laval constitutes one of a trinity among the great Universities of all English-speaking countries which can boast of a picture gallery worthy of the appellation. The other two in this trinity are the great Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The paintings in the Fitzwilliam Museum, the pride of the latter great seat of learning, I have actually worked upon, so that I know them familiarly. But coming back to Laval, the large number of valuable paintings contained in the collection warrants every care being taken to preserve them and display them to the greatest advantage. If the 400 and odd paintings, many of which are veritable masterpieces, were to be put into proper condition and adequately framed, they



would form a source of the greatest attraction, instruction and interest to visitors and students, as well as disseminating the taste for Art.

The work that has already been effected will give some idea of what can be done if seriously persisted in. The two altar-pieces were considered hopelessly ruined, so charred and begrimed were they after the fire which devastated the Seminary Chapel some eighteen years ago.

The opinion is a very universal one, that steps should be taken not only to ensure the safety of the priceless collection of paintings, the equally priceless engravings and the great and unique library of the University, but that these deserve and urgently call for more adequate space and better lighting accommodation.

The value of a collection of paintings very largely depends upon its perfect condition, so that each work may be properly viewed, judged and estimated. A painting in a bad state can neither be adequately viewed, judged or estimated, except by the practical expert—proper framing and

decorative surroundings also largely contributing to the right enjoyment of works of Art.

The paintings which have been restored—some 15 in number—were all in a very bad state of neglect and decay, but the restoration of them to as near as possible their original beauty, not only enhances their appearance and makes them once more beautiful, but their value also is enhanced.

Taking the splendid original work called "The Fruit Garland," and which is undoubtedly a genuine work by the great master Rubens, to confirm my first opinion upon it, in relining it, I found the date painted on the back of the original canvas, namely: 1614. There is not the slightest doubt that this beautiful work is the original "project" for the larger work, which is in Munich and which is known to have been painted in 1618.

It is current information that the King of the Belgians is negotiating with the State Museum at Brussels for the purchase of a painting by Rubens and the price mentioned is \$200,000, and he has actually sold a Vandyke for \$30,000.

So anyone can safely draw conclusions as to what the Laval Rubens is worth as modern markets go.

The British Government, last year, purchased "A Family Group," by Frans Hals, the Dutch painter, from its owner, for \$125,000, yet this very same painting was sold at auction, about 60 years ago in London for but \$200.

Only last week the National Gallery of London bought a portrait of the Duchess of Milan, painted by Hans Holbein, for \$300,000. I know that painting well, as I saw it almost daily when I lived in London. It was owned by the Duke of Norfolk. I admit it is a very fine work, but I think the price is excessive. However, this shows the tendencies of the modern market of Art, for real genuine Art.

Genuine works by the old masters are ever increasing in value year by year, and must continue so to increase.

Your collection here, at Laval, was purchased and acquired at the time of the Revolution and at a time when genuine works could be bought, and it is to-day of immense value. This

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applies also to the splendid and unique collection of the rarest engravings, which, however, cannot be shown for lack of space.

The wonderful library, too, is justly famous, containing, as it does, over 300,000 volumes, innumerable rare manuscripts and illuminations, unique collections of Canadiana and Americana.

I noticed, too, only last week for the first time, a great many rare objects of art, including china, porcelain, enamel, bronzes, armour, an Indian collection, and one of the most important collections, historically, of coins, and many very rare and beautiful as well as sacred relics, things which can hardly be seen and which require proper cataloguing and tabulating.

I have not been able yet to make an estimate of the value of the paintings, but I should say their value would easily run into the two million dollar mark. I will not attempt to speak of the engravings and the great library, with its priceless tomes and rare bindings. To particularize in a few instances some of the paintings so as

to give an idea of your valuable possessions, I would draw attention to the lovely portrait of Mrs Siddons, the celebrated and cultured English actress. It is undoubtedly one of several original works painted from life, by Sir Thos Lawrence, and must be worth between 20 to 30 thousand dollars, probably more. That painting was in a lumber room in a deplorable condition covered with blisters and cracks, and black with dirt. The same remarks apply to the Purification by Guido Reni. It was in a terribly blistered condition, yet it is one of his best works. The magnificent work representing "Our Lord's call to Peter," by Saluator Rosa, hung for many years at the top of the staircase of the Seminary. In the fire which burned the roof, it became very much damaged by water and the paint had become detached and it was covered with decayed vernish. It has now been re-lined on new canvas and cleaned. Many years ago, a work by Salvator Rosa, sold for \$100,000, and, to-day, his works are in the ascendancy. The portrait of Cardinal Prince Trivultius is another case in point where the work had been entirely repainted over, and so disfigured that it was un-

recognizable. I obtained permission to take off the repaints which covered the work, and discovered the present work and the inscription upon it, and the date 1643, the very year Trivultilus went from Italy to Aragona, in Spain, as viceroy, and where he would, of course, have met the great Velasquez, who was then court painter. This work requires more careful cleaning yet, as well as restoring, to make it a work of the very first rank, as well as of enormous value.

Upon a painting representing St Jerome I found the signature of the artist, Adam Elshimer, upon it, and the then unidentified portrait of a gentleman, no 175, I found the engraving identifying it beyond doubt, as the portrait of Lord Holland, the father of Charles-James Fox. I believe it to be an early work by Gainsborough. Another early portrait by Gainsborough is that of Luc la Corne, known as "General of the Indians." It is the original and represents the General wearing the order and the ribbon of St Louis. Upon a rare work, representing a view of the sea shore, I found the signature upon it, C. J. Vernet, fecit Roma, 1748.

I could continue to enumerate several hundreds more of valuable works, but this would take up too much time. I feel it important, however, to call special attention to a group of portraits which are unique on the American continent as a solitary instance among many. I refer to the royal portraits of Louis XV and his family. Four at least of these are by the famous François Boucher, and the others are by La Tour. There is a superb work representing *Spring*, which is added to the exhibition. It should be cleaned to reveal its great beauties. This is also by Boucher. Another French portrait is that which went by the name of Diane de Poitiers, by Goujon, 15th Century. But this is 17th Century work and it is by Largillière and represents, I feel confident, Madame du Barry. Now, if only these Royal portraits could be properly restored (and I assure you they are as fine as pearls), and placed in splendid frames, they would attract universal attention, as they are unique. They should be especially hung in a separate chamber, and beautifully set upon costly hangings, emblazoned with the Royal Arms of France.

There is a great necessity existing for a new building as a museum, fire-proof, and standing out of all possible danger of fire. This building is needed very urgently to place in it all the priceless treasures owned by Laval University and the Seminary. It would constitute, if a suitable building were erected, a museum second to none on this continent and surpassing all in many instances. Volumes could with advantage be written upon the great treasures stored at Laval University.

And yet, at the present time, this vast wealth in treasures which could not be purchased at all to-day, stands in great danger of fire, and if a catastrophe should happen, it would be a terrible loss not only to the University, but to Canada; nay, to the whole world at large.

The dissemination of art and culture through galleries and schools of art has always been considered of the greatest value as an auxiliary or indispensable adjunct in the higher education, and governments have adopted systems of Art education and training specially calculated to promote taste and in-



struction so as to raise the standard of efficiency among the working and professional classes, with a view to effecting superiority in the manufactures, trades, and professions, so as to increase the demand in the domestic use as well as the foreign demand or outlet.

Everything that is done to promote art and culture not only helps to beautify and improve the city itself, or to improve the mental and moral calibre of its own population, but is an aid to the country at large by setting example from which great good results and, as Ovid says, "*Ingenuas dedecisse fideliter artes emollit mores nec sinit esse feros,*" which, of course, means, "to intelligently dedicate ourselves to the faithful pursuit of the fine arts, is to soften the manners and make us more unlike the brute creation.

The inculcating of art and culture has at least a two-fold advantage, namely, whilst giving power to the hand and practice to the eye, in making fine handcraft, if not actually works of art, it simultaneously develops the mind and leads to the contemplation and cultivation of the

whole range of the fine arts. When we can draw and paint and design we are inadvertently and unconsciously developing an appetite for the Beautiful or the Beautiful and then we begin to thirst for the Belles-Lettres and with trepidity we seek the elysian fields of poetry and then we begin to realise what we have neglected and lost and what was nearly lost to us forever.

There is one thing certain, however, at least, and it is this, that if Canada neglects Art in the development of her manufactures by a system of art training, other nations will not, for they are following the wonderful system of Great Britain, where National Art Training has been established and extensively applied in every town and city of the United Kingdom since 1862 or thereabouts, with the result that the manufactures of Great Britain are superior to any other in the world and are sought for even at greatly advanced prices in every country in preference to all other nation's products. France was quick to adopt the English National Art Training system not many years after its inception in England. It was one of the first great works our

late good and noble Queen of blessed memory, sought to give the British people the advantage of and which was due to her own exquisite culture and that of her Princely Consort.

The establishment of the art gallery is the forerunner of the art school, and the greatest country of the future will be the country where the population is not only the highest morally, but the most cultured and the most trained in the ennobling Arts of Peace.

In conclusion, I hope at some near future, to have the honour of speaking upon this important subject from a moral and psychological standpoint, as well as from a practical point of view.

I cannot help feeling that everyone of whatsoever nationality or creed, should, in the sense of an impelling duty, do their utmost to avert the existing danger and help to the utmost to erect the needed building for a grand National Museum, which would not only be the crowning glory of Laval University, but of the Queen of Cities, QUEBEC.

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