The Royal Canadian Academy Exhibition.

In reviewing the exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy we are reminded of the expression "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." We are not disposed to "rush in." Indeed, we fear to tread for many reasons. The hours of precious time are spent in the completing of these present paintings, and the weary, industrious hours which made them possible, in previous studies; the amount of mental and spiritual energy which has been drained from the inner consciousness; the personality of each artist poured into his subject; the varying emotions of grief and love, of joy and hate, which each artist has put into his picture. And yet, if one few minutes to examine the subject, he can see it and the others—all combine to make them approach with sympathy and reverence. They are the visible expressions of hearts and minds, expressions which, when displayed for public view, should be held as sacred. To commence to point out a trick of technique here and there, a silk of brush or the pencil, is frivolous and insipid. The ideas portrayed are the primary consideration. The lifting of these ideas into the ideal and clothing our earthly relations and surroundings with beauty and sentiment, enabling our lives and raising them out of the vulgar and the common, is the lofty aim of the artist. We are pale in poor and poor respect to the Royal Canadian Academy.

Of portraits there are not a few. Carlyle says that historical portrait galleries far transcend in worth all kinds of national collections of pictures whatever, and that they ought to exist in every country as among the most popular and cherished national possessions. Truly, if the Royal Canadian Academy be the means of preserving these personalities which are in themselves an epitomized history of our social life (that is, if the representation of the Royal Canadian be extended to such a point that we are historians as well as painters). They make us understand the history of our country, with pages of heavy debtors and build for themselves a monument more lasting than bronze. Every year sees additional to the historical wealth of the country in portraits stored away in public halls or private rooms. If the Academy will. restore, ere it be too late, the many earlier characters which have left their impress upon the life of the nation, it will be well. Citizens who lay claim to a share of patriotism should make this an easy duty.

We doubt not that all the portraits are faithful representations of the individuals who posed for them. Some contain, of course, greater artistic merit than others. Those of Mr. Harris approach very near indeed what we are accustomed to consider the style of old masters, notably that of John Hammond, R.C.A. F. M. Bell Smith shows three of Mrs. Gale being splendidly displayed in her delicacy and sweetness. She combines with them the power and richness unusual in so young a lady. J. W. L. Forster's work is well known to Canadians and speaks for itself—it is always a correct likeness of his subject. We could wish the pose of Dr. Kingsford to have been more suggestive of a reliable framework. In Hon. G. W. Allan, E. Wylye Grier has had a most difficult undertaking. To represent the general personality, to capture the weight of such cumbrousness, to give that a man, with the men and carriage of the dignified official indicated, is indeed a work of art. Without this predominant feeling of life the painting resolves itself into an excel-

SMOKY WEATHER.
CARL AHRNIS, A.R.C.A.

as they would be shown by a character such as Henflin, under her circumstances. All must admit that Mr. Knowles has succeeded both in his interpretation of the character and the rendering of her expression of it; and further, if beauty be the truth of art he has been able to do this in a most artistic way. Those who see in this picture merely a lover's damsel, in realistic surroundings, have not caught anything of the spirit of early mythology. It delights one to see such a subject attempted. None should fail to see, and see again, the figure subjects of R. P. Harris. For richness of coloring, artistic dress and pose, manifest life and sympathetic setting, they are the work of a great artist. In striking contrast to these, as far as detail is concerned, are the sketches of Miss Munt. With the disadvantages arising from want of background, there are yet musical symphonies in notes of true harmony, sweetness and power. Miss Tully has two good subjects. The self-abandonment and utter absorption indicated in William Bryer's Girls is delightful, as also in F. Brownell's Reader. The brilliant lights and deep shadows, and predominant air of sentiment, makes F. S. Chaloner's Relief of a Past True Art.

T. M. Martin, Miss Ford, Miss Hillyard, E. M. Morris, Mrs. Schrieber, Miss Elliot, Miss Living and E. M. Ross all contribute in figure subjects, and none are lacking in excellent qualities. Several interiors are to be seen. Reading to

STUDIO IN THE CATSKILLS.
M. H. REID, A.R.C.A.

my Mother, by Miss Carlyle, is full of rich coloring delightfully harmonious. The Modeler contains immense detail. Miss Hagerty sends several Dutch interiors, containing indications of power in treatment. We are glad to send, to measure French-Canadian interior by E. Morris. If the members of the Academy would do another good thing for their country—all these suggestions are gratifying—they will make immortal, as far as paint can make immortal, many of the
interiors of those homes in our Dominion where the foundation stones of our national life have been laid, and which have made art possible in Canada. The figure of sweet dignity and yet marked individuality which stands out so essentially separate from her surroundings in C. E. Moss's Fireside Reveries, is full of suggestion. Another delightful interior is that in which is a woman spinning, her child looking on—I have not at present the artist's name. You can almost hear the hum of the wheel as it flies. The wool is most woolly. The concentrated attention of both mother and child indicates their absorption in the occupation. Flowers are few and confined to roses, lilacs, chrysanthemums, petunias. We wonder that so little attempt has ever been made to portray our native wild flowers in permanent fashion. There is room here for some artist—she must be a lady, of course, to make her name immortal in this line. The panel of yellow roses painted by Mrs. Reid repays prolonged study, and in it will ever be found new delights of color and feeling and composition.

Several dogs have been admitted into the sacred precincts of the Academy and carry themselves with a due sense of their importance and very distinctive qualities of birth and breeding. Mr. Staples' Irish Setter has a characteristic twinkle in his eye, while the St. Bernard of Mr. Sherwood takes life more seriously. A black calf has also strayed in, and why not? If it were not for F. A. Verner, Canadians would ere long forget that such animals as buffaloes ever roamed the vast prairies and fed the Indians.

We hope to speak of the landscapes and also of the mural decoration next week.

We beg to remind our readers of the lecture to be delivered under the auspices of the Rosedale League of School Art in the Rosedale school, on Saturday, March 12, at three p.m., when Rev. G. M. Milligan, D.D., will lecture on The Importance of the Imagination in a Sound Education.

The W. A. A. will also remember their sketch class at Miss Kerr's, 76 Howard street.

The newspapers are once showing some attention to art—at all events letting the country know that the R.C.A. exhibition is now being held in Toronto. Jean Grant.