The Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

THAT Ottawa, as all parts of this land, should find an object of secondary interest these days, is not to be wondered at. So the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts found itself this year in somewhat unsympathetic surroundings, unfavorable alike for good attendance and for sales, neither of which conditions formed a conspicuous feature of this year's exhibition. The experience of the nineteenth century, and the twenty-first exhibition of the Academy.

We have, however, always held the truth that "our galleries of art are both the fruit and the index of their surroundings," and will not likely rise much above the tenor of the existing conditions. The exhibition was little better, and no worse, perhaps, than those of other years.

About the advance in portraiture, however, there can be no question. To feel the force of this, we have but to compare the portraiture of the Academy of to-day with that of his can do better things than he showed at the R.C.A., although his Singing Lesson and Idia are both charming. In the Singing Lesson, a young girl in a flowing robe of lovely yellow, holding a sheet of music in one hand, is getting her note on a piano with the other.

Canadian landscape painters are few. Impottors of nature, there may be many. But of those who go behind the external and give forth depth and feeling, in the translation of nature—these are few. Homer Watson is no imitator; neither is G. A. Reid, nor Maurice-Cullen, nor Wm. Brymmer; nor is J. W. Morrice, of Montreal; nor is Arch. Brophy, of Kingston, striding ahead fast in his knowledge of nature; nor is E. Dyonnet, nor F. McGillivray Knowles (although from Morrice's slight representation at this particular exhibition a fair judgment of his art could not be reached). Nor is Mrs. Reid an imitator. She has no peer here in the world of flowers. Her flower gardens are masses of beautiful color, of light and shade, with exquisite drawing. So the list is larger than we thought. Dr. Mackenzie, of Kingston, also, if he continues the study of the anatomy of nature, will be able to tell us some things which are his alone. Edmund Morris, of Toronto, too, has convictions, somewhat unaesthetic but as yet they are not in evidence. Miss Houghton, of Montreal, Miss Jack, of Ottawa, also, interpret nature for us. R. F. Gagen was well represented by work of greater clarity, softness and brilliancy of color, and quality that is almost perfect. Of W. D. Blatchly's scenes, we heard several expressions of admiration. Miss Tully ...

by Marip treat-all nature with delicate and tender hand.

We are impressed with the fact that we are not the only Canadian School of Art, no recognized methods of interpretation which could be said to be the direct outcome of our distinctive civilization, the expression of our national genius, as the school of the Netherland, for instance, produced, when civilization was in a much more primitive state. We are convinced that there is yet a field of interpretation of Canadian thought and life, untravelled as yet by our artists. Millet is an example of what we mean in his own land. Homer Watson gives us his translation of landscape, and G. A. Reid comes nearest, in our estimation, to the possession of that spirit and genius which could give expression to what is distinctively Canadian in life subjects.

We are a commercial people, a people of agriculture and manufacturing, comparatively commonplace. Is there, therefore, no art in these? "No interiors worth painting," we hear. That is nonsense, mere nonsense. We want the artists who will take our humblest scenes of Canadian life, interpret for us, and in so doing glorify them with his art. If some of our artists would stay away from Paris, or rather leave Paris when they come home, and live in Canada, in her literature, her history, her all life, we would have less of a hybrid art.

The interest in the exhibition of the Woman's Art Association continues unabated. Quite a mass of interesting matter has been collected, and an opportunity is given of seeing works of art of different kinds not often exposed to public view. Every lady interested in anything will find some matter for study here...

F. McGillivray Knowles receives in his new studio on Saturday afternoon...

The annual exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists opens on Saturday, March 3rd, at 2 p.m., and will continue for at least two weeks. No invitations have been issued, as has been the custom in previous years, but a fee of twenty-five cents is due from each visitor. JEAN GRANT.

Landscape, by Homer Watson, R.C.A.

For a city of so much intelligence, and a fair amount of wealth, art is not a very prominent feature in Ottawa's civilization at any time. Again it may be, as has been mildly suggested, that perhaps as yet Canadian artists have scarcely succeeded in persuading the public that they have anything of importance to show; anything which has not been demonstrated already in some better way.

There was no special manifestation that on the whole the artists themselves, with one or two exceptions, made any special effort to produce original work. Again, the Academy past as it is seen, for instance, in the Ottawa Parliament Buildings. The rigidity of outline, the artificiality of conception, the lack of values, and notably of any idea of texture, the absence of careful modelling, all contrast visibly with the excellent work of to-day. The work of Robert Harris, R.C.A., will surely compare favorably with that of English artists. His portrait of Judge Teck in the exhibition is a piece of powerful and beautiful work. His study of a head in profile was one of the most beautiful pieces in the exhibition. We are glad to know that the English commission for the Paris Exposition has corresponded to ask for a solitary example of Canadian art, and that example is to be the portrait group by Mr. Harris, of Mrs. Porteous and her children, about which there seems to be a little difference of opinion that it is the best work of that character yet produced in Canada. The Studio will also reproduce it. Confidence of oil, great strength and harmony of color, sympathetic and rational interpretation of his subject distinguish all his work. A feature of his flesh tint, which is also a feature of that of Miss Munter's and C. Moss of Ottawa, is its transparency, its mobility, its flexibility. There is flesh of putty, of bronze, the flesh of the corpse, the flesh of leather, but the flesh of life is not always to be found. A. Dickson Patterson was well represented by his well-known portrait of the late Sir George Kirkpatrick; E. Wylly Grier, by E. F. B. Johnston; J. W. L. Forster, by Dr. Rand; Brownell, of Ottawa, and many others.

An Auld Light, by C. E. Moss, R.C.A.,

is also an artist whom we may be proud to possess, whose chief work, however, has not been published. He presents it in figures. What we personally particularly delighted in, in landscape, were two of Homer Watson's, one a forest clearing with brown trees, brown timber, brown ground, scudding clouds, blue sky and wind, eerie sheep, early evening was gently, hardly perceptibly, spreading. A Mantle...
The portraiture of E. Dyonnet, of Montreal, refined in feeling, with a subtle combination of delicacy and power, we enjoyed very much.

Of figure work, C. E. Moss, of Ottawa, had several old men, all with minutely careful modelling, and alive with sentiment. The Fisherman was a feature of the whole display, and his Auld Licht might be Barrie's original "leading elder" with a dash of benevolence added. Miss Muntz's figures of Dutch subjects, of children, were vivid, pronounced, and living. The little Rose, Maiden, in pink, which has appeared already in this column, called forth general admiration. A subject for mural decoration by G. A. Reid helped greatly to give the charm of originality without which any collection of paintings is one dead level of monotony. A nude figure, low in tone, playing a flute, is standing with his back to us, leaning slightly against a tall tree, on the edge of a stream. Masses of golden clouds are reflected with brilliancy in the water; strong contrasts of blues, purples, and greens make a striking and beautiful background. Miss Tully, J. G. Franchere, Miss Hagarty, were also characteristically represented in figure work; Miss Heaves by several clever pastel studies. Mr. Harris' Young Canada, it is hop-

FRENCH CANADIAN INTERIOR, BY MISS S. TULLY, A.R.C.A.

or not, is a weakness on its part. Some of the works contributed by those neither members nor associates were very much in advance of those of some of the members, as Miss Hagarty's Spanish subject for instance, relegated to a corner. We wonder what the committee or the artists saw in several pieces we could name to entitle them to a place on the walls of the Academy at this late day. The end of

THE SINGING LESSON, BY F. S. CHALLENGER, R.C.A.

ed, will be purchased by a citizen of Ottawa for the National Gallery. It well deserves such a fate; or perhaps we should say it deserves a better fate. Another painting which would grace a National Gallery is the one by W. Cruikshank, a telling tale of Canadian early life, and deserving of a place in the country's records. F. S. Challenge-

of Rest, a really delicious early evening effect by E. Dyonnet, the flush of warmth in the sky, quickly passing into coldness and gloom, caught by the responsive earth, and enveloping the figures of cattle and the girl winding their way homewards; the Tinklers of Miss Jack; Washing Day, by J. W.

Morrice, a study in greens apparently; and two tender little bits by J. Arch. Browne. There was other excellent work, but these we carry with us, and hope they may long remain. Some day we hope to climb the Selkirk's and see if we can learn their language, and hear their voice. We have a dim perception it must be a voice of great dignity, and the message one of appalling grandeur. Perhaps we should not ever be able to understand it; but when we hear, we shall appreciate Mr. Bell-Smith's interpretation of them. Just now we fall short of that. We enjoyed also Miss Spurr's little bit of autumn glory.

Our artists seem chary of water. If Ruskin was right, they are wise not to say they know water, hardly even in its most placid and apparently commonplace moods—if water is ever commonplace. Forshaw Day gave a glint of it around Quebec; and Manly Macdonald told of its murkiness and degradation in a marshy pool; R. F. Gagen caught something of its limpidness, its transparency, and its vitality, in his Lobster Catcher; and Miss Tully hinted at its dire possibilities in Niagara River. W. E. Bynner presented it in many tones of soft greys and browns; and C. E. Moss in quite opposite tones of subdued yellows, greens, blues, greys and reds, all of which qualities originated, quite orthodoxy, in his variegated sky. Hen-