ROYAL CANADIAN
ACADEMY OF ARTS.

Pictures Shown This Year Are
Of Unusual Excellence.

MARKED BY GREAT VARIETY

Touches of Lofty Thought in the Figure Pictures.

Landscapes More Free From Cruel Impressionism—Many Fine Portraits—
Lient-Governor's Speech in Opening the Exhibition.

People do not as a rule look at a picture in the same spirit in which they listen to a song or a sermon, or see a play or an opera, or read a poem or a tale. Color, it is said, was the last of the human senses to develop, and perhaps this has something to do with the weakness of the appeal to the average man of what is distinctively called art. It would appear that the artist who makes the most general and deep-seated impression is he who presents what the greatest number of average people can see in any one subject. That is to say, the great artist embodies as many points of view as belong to those who see his pictures. The artist of a school has one point of view, and finds one sympathizer in a million. To get a million points of view on one level is not so much the need, as to obtain many points of view upon their subject. Shakespeare says: "He that desireth more must need be greater." But on the other hand, the other point of view is to be had everywhere. There are degrees between this and the young persons who see nothing from anywhere. The point at which the Canadian artist should stand is that from which the more mundane can have a great effect. The walls need not be limited in elevation to preserve his nationality. But it depends more upon his standpoint than upon his outlook.

This, at least, will serve as a subject of debate to those who visit the twenty-sixth annual exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, which opened last night at the Gallery of the Ontario Association of Artists, King street west.

Great Variety, Unusual Excellence.

The Ontario Exhibition a few months ago betrayed very much more strikingly the tendency to one point of view than is to be found in the present collection, whose variety certainly emphasizes its excellence. The walls are crowded with pictures, and some objection may be had to this by the critic, but it is a fault which might be remedied in any almost exhibition by the rejection of the score or more pictures which no good reason can ever be found for having hung.

An exhibition is not judged by its poor pictures, but by its good ones, and there are so many outstanding pictures in these that any particular of them is in future will be a criterion of high excellence. There are many fine portraits. The landscapes are more free from the impressionism than the case for some time. There is more imagination and sympathy in the figure pictures, and there are touches of lofty thought in several of these. The kindred feeling of the artist for the lower worker is evident in many pictures of homely life. Combining this kindly feeling with a high and noble sentiment, Mr. Patterson's "My Mother in a Garden Hat" of a very charming picture of beautiful art. Wm. Crerar's painting of the same subject is a fine study, and Miss M. Alberta Cleland's portrait (36), and Miss Lorna Lomax's (106), are of special interest.

An Artistic Portraiture

It remained for George A. Reid, however, to contribute what may be called the most artistic portrait on the walls. It is that of Prof. Pelham Edgar (149), and is something new in the twilight atmosphere from which he looks, the body of a literary man in the dim thought-world, where he is at home. The quiet tone of the picture is in surprising contrast with the vivid and brilliant pictures in the show. Miss Clara S. Hagarty's "Lady in Black" (95) shows a somewhat masculine face, in which strength and refinement, naturalness and economy are combined. "Hungry Pig" (305) confronts and holds the visitor in the first room, and adds much to the reputation of Curtis Mayfield, who is in the same group. "Normandy Interior" (204), is the composition of careful studies of interiors.

Miss Mary J. Wrinch has painted a picture in "Reverie" (185), although the lighting made it almost invisible last night. The yearning of humanity for the wonder of life is said to dwell in this haunting and very clever picture. Miss Laura Munro's "The Wreath" shows a wonderful "Charming Fruit" (124), in which an arch looks at a little boy for a moment. The brilliant coloring and the ruddy infant are good to see.

The sovereignty and sweetness of Robert J. Weidkessel's (Montreal) "Queen of the Night" is remarkable for the features of the rooms. The modeling of the figure calls for praise, the arms being of great beauty. Miss Sydney S. Tully shows a pastel of "Autumn" with a furry ball of snow. A miniature by Miss Louise L. Kastner (102) is an example of a drapery figure, the jewelled casket and the ethereal wings may well choose the color. E. Wyly Grier's "Daughter of the Empire" (126) is an exquisite portrait in her father's scarlet trappings.

A Memorable Picture

J. W. J. Forster has produced a memorable picture in "Ivanhoe" (96). The sly physique and olive tints of the Hindu girl at once lift it out of the conventional, and the white and black are splendid, with the little feet that have been cunningly fashioned. Behind, however, is a Sassanid inscription, symbolizing the antiquity of revelation, and beyond it are dim and ghostly shadows of Gothic arches, and of a star.

Among the landscapes it is difficult to find a more interesting than that of the "Western Autumn near Chatham" (69) is the title, which is at least better than a snowy winter. There is only one winter scene, a view in Rossdale (170), by Oscar Neilson, which is typical of the district. "Mountain Landscape" (152) has a somewhat cold sky, but the woodlands and the stream are pleasant. G. Russell Horne in "A Meadow Stream" has one of the most attractive landscapes of the show. The painters were not afraid of detail. The Englishmen and the Dutchmen and the Italians, and the rest, packed their pictures full of it. William Brymner, R. G. A., Montreal, "Clearing Weather, Lower St. Lawrence," (112), suggests the wealth and richness of autumn. And there is Maurice, Ouellet's "Work" (40), with all the gloom and depression of the enslavement which has done more to destroy art or to give it development than anything else. There was a most fashionable attendance for the opening, and his Honor the Lient-Governor attending at a quarter to 8. He and Miss James, the Academy officials received him at the entrance to the salon.

Growing Interest in Art

The Lieutenant-Governor, in formally opening the exhibition, said that it appreciated very highly the artists of the Academy and the public upon his own. He had for a long time been interested in the growth of the Academy as well as in the Society of Artists of Ontario, and had also with a good deal of pleasure the growing interest in art among the people. There had been a good deal of material prosperity, and it would probably turn to the benefit of the artists. When first he came there were very few artists and their works were largely appreciated. It did them good to be present at such an exhibition. Many pictures otherwise beautiful failed to meet with the favor of the public. Art was a joy forever, but if had one flaw, it might rest assured that it became its most salient point. Their skill in former years in drawing and color now has a tendency to increase and advancing merit. He heartily congratulated the members of the Academy in building up such an exhibition. No doubt their efforts in the past would be continued in the future.