ROYAL CANADIAN ACADEMY'S 42ND EXHIBITION OPEN

Some Canvases That Stand Out—Marked Decrease in New Departures Noted

There are two features that impress one at the forty-second exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, which opened last night at the galleries of the Art Association on Sherbrooke Street. The first is the tendency to try and attract attention by doing nothing. A.R.C.A. adheres to his individualism. The second is that a few canvases stand out from the monotonous level—works from the established men and from the younger school alike. It happened that the exhibition as a whole indicates an advance upon that of previous years, however. There is lacking, as a general rule, the note of distinction. This is, perhaps, less a fact. One would welcome more evidence of ambition, a more definite advance towards something characteristic Canadian. But it is not yet in evidence.

Of outstanding canvases two of the most interesting are from the brush of John A. Beazley. He gives us a study of sunlight and shadow in the woods that commands admiration, alike for fluid handling of light and for mastery composition. His colors are characterized by rich tones and a finely executed sky, and are of a degree.

Mr. Cullen follows his fixed bent, and with himself to landscape. He is at his best in winter scenes, and his "Winter" (56), with its suggestion of frozen silence, is the most characteristic of his pictures. It may represent his high-watermark in this sort of work.

In "Maison de Cavalier de la Salle" (67), Georges Delhource has done a very satisfying thing. He has caught the light on richly-colored foliage, and painted a scene which is nobly Canadian in type.

The dream-children of Charles de Belle's imagination are always a delight. His "Rainy Day" (85), and "Sinless" (66), he has sent to the exhibition two of the loveliest pastels we have seen from his hand. Their ethereal quality is not the least of their charm. Mr. de Bell shows us a new side of his art,—one which, at least in the portrait of Mrs. Edith Maxwell and daughter (64), possesses qualities worthy study.

Apart from three conventional portraits, Mr. Ernest Forsley, A.R.C.A., has turned a little sketch, in which light upon the water is cleverly handled, and which embodies sound composition and refinement in coloring. Clarence Gagnon is a black fan touched with red in his individual style in "The Farm on the Highland" (106), a vigorous winter scene, but in "Peasants Crossing on Ice Bridge, Quebec" (107), he has achieved something really distinctive in a new genre. A. Y. Jackson, R.C.A., is "In the Rain" (135), and exhibits an example of violent treatment.

Mr. G. Horne Russell has done few studies of cattle that will be held to excel his "Homeward" (220)—a notable landscape in his most authoritative style. He shows also typical portrait work.

The president of the Academy, Homer Watson, has a couple of landscapes that will attract attention. Particularly fine work in his "Wooded River" (256) pleases with its distinction in composition and in coloring, and its sound brushwork. Two symbolic canopies mark instances where he has reached his best, a fact to express an idea with conviction.

From Percy Woodcock come four finished examples of that sterling artist's work,—refined in quality, in treatment, and the use of those qualities that make a landscape something more than pigment on canvas.

Mr. Suzor-Cote's big canvas, "The Beginning of the Maples" (241), presents a vigorous and highly-colored spectacle of an ancient French-Canadian custom, and possesses historical interest and considerable technical quality. There are, however, who will turn with more satisfaction perhaps, to his unquestionably distinguished view of a countryside seen "In the Rainy" (243), which contains many qualities of atmospheric and color values, and the landscape near Anse-Billaud at the end of March. Mr. Suzor-Cote is one of the most interesting of artists, because he is always breaking new ground. His work reveals mastery in the handling of light and atmosphere, originality in composition, color, and also—which is much more difficult to attain—luminosity.

W. St. Thomas Smith's "Orkney Home" (236) is a cleverly-toned landscape in water-color. Arthur D. R. O'rai has but one exhibit, "Old Mission, California" (217), but is worth examination. Charles W. Simpson shows three marines, in which his painting of sky and cloud is better than that of the ocean. G. A. Reid, R.C.A., in "The Quiet River" (208), has achieved emphatic success in depicting shadows on the water and massed foliage. Lorna F. Reid's "Air Castles" (206), is one of the works of the younger school, which holds great promise. It has poetry, feeling, and is good in composition. Miss H. Mabel May, A.R.C.A., in "The Pink Balloon" (176), has also contributed a canvas that reveals imagination and interesting technique.

One notes also such canvases as "October's Restful Tones" (172), by M. C. Mower Martin, R.C.A., with fine sky; "Waiting" (190), by Marion Long, one of the most distinctive works in the exhibition, depicting a young girl seated on the floor; holding a notable example of second coloring: "The Thunder Cloud" (152), and "Windswept" (153), by F. McMillan Knowles, R.C.A.; Randolph S. Hewton's admirable portrait of Miss Sybil Robertson (128), a most successful effort to break away from convention, and yet keep within the limits of real artistry, and the most interesting portrait in the exhibition from a technical viewpoint; Miss Featherstone's attractive study of a pine tree (36); Clara S. Hagarty's study in green, "In Britain's Garden" (118); Gertrude des Clayes' alluring but unfinished portrait of Miss Bertha des Clayes (74), and her masterly sketch of F. N. Beardmore (73); Miss Berthe des Clayes' delightful "Souvenir de la Guerre" (71), a peasant woman with her surroundings, by a. T. MacNeil; R.C.A., in "A Blue Day" (70), as well as typical examples of the well-known work of F. M. Bell-Smith, R.C.A.; J. M. Barnsley, Harry Britton, A.R.C.A.; J. W. Beatty, R.C.A.; W. Brymner, C.M.G., R.C.A.; F. S. Challener, R.C.A.; R. Bally, J. C. Franchere; R. F. Gagen, R.C.A.; E. W. Grier, R.C.A.; A. Wilkie Kilgour; Wilfrid M. Barnes (whose "The Day Turns Ghost" (5), is a canvas that repays study; Hal Ross, Ferrigard; Albert H. Robinson, A.R.C.A.; and J. Saint-Charles, R.C.A. 

There is more sculpture on exhibition than usual. Henri Hebert, A.R.C.A., Miss Emily Grinnell (74), and a bronze "Life is Full of Thorns" (269), a finely modelled piece, and "Le Faune" (265), in which a poetic conception is conveyed with considerable success. Mr. A. L. Isbister, R.C.A., contributes two statues and one bust in plaster. The latter, of Judge Choquette, is an unusually fine example of work. R. J. L. H. Sciolino's "Weight of Dissolution" (276), does not lack vision. Of the rest, J. S. Sciolino's "Weight of Dissolution" (276), is an ambitious and by no means unsuccessful effort to convey a big idea by symbolism.

In the etching and black-and-white section, one single out Hal Ross Perigard's "Cold" (332) and Herbert Rainie's "Old House in a Courtyard" (360). Four studies by Mr. Suzor-Cote visualize distinctive types with authority. His nude study is particularly good. S. MORGAN-POWELL.