The Spring Exhibition

It would be difficult to find anything of outstanding significance in the forty-sixth annual Spring Exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy which was opened yesterday with the usual formal "private view" social event. Of course, if the exhibition is to be regarded as merely a record of what artists are doing during the past year by Canadian artists—and that is a fairly sound premise there is no doubt that there is at no rate good ground for satisfaction that the craze for ugliness which has been so evident in some quarters is on the decline. There are still some samples of this "faux" school, but they are not so numerous as they were a few years ago. The art world, it seems, is again in the consolidation of itself and the recognition of the past is obvious in the present case. We may now hope that this ghastly period of aberration is over and that the public is receptive in its reading of the North into the two blazed tree trunks and a big black cloud, or a large landscape scene can still be appreciated apparently spread upon canvas with a trowel.

One naturally turns to so authentic a portrait-painter as Alfred Louis Jouve, and "Portrait de Monsieur J. C. M. (115) is a sound example of his masterly technique, and shows the artist at his best. G. L. C. (117) shows his skill in colouring as well as modelling, while the large tree trunk in "Lobster Barn" (116) is much more sparkling in tone than is customary with him. The portrait of "John Watson, M.A., J.D.D. (115), and "Howard Smith, Esq." (116) are admirable in their composition, in flesh tones, and in treatment of fabric and background. Mr. Horne Russell's "Young Sailor" is a strong piece of marine work. The "Loughborugh Lights" (150), in which the blue wave dances over the deep blue water, is a picture of a scene in which the air is never still, and the figures are always moving along under a stiff breeze. There is movement in both water and sky, and the lighting is dexterously contrived.

Charles de Belle exhibits two portraits of an unusual type—three children of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Perleyn (151) and "Mr. and Mrs. M. R. (152). The faces are luminous against a delicate background. They present studies of facial expression and character. Charles de Belle also exhibits a characteristic symbolic picture of fairy children, "A Fairy Gathering" (145), which shows his poetic imagination and feeling for phantasy, and two pastels, "A Hungarian Girl" (149), of which the former in particular is executed in exquisite soft atmosphere tones. R. C. A. shows a portrait of "Mrs. MacKenzie R. Campbell" (73) and "Mrs. John L. Davidson" (74), in the photographic manner this artist has developed.

Taking the landscapes in alphabetical order, for purposes of convenience in catalogue reference, we come to the Robert G. Campbell, of which "Cloud Shadows" (8) is unexampled in the northwestern country. The most interesting examples of the characteristic water colour work of the late William Brymner, C.M.G., R.C.A., are interesting as affording a study in the forcing of the older work of the artists of the day. St. George Burgess, who shows consistently well, has a spacious Laurentian winter scene of snowshoed slope and jack pine trees, "At the Filling Station, River, P.Q." (21). The tones are good, and the drawing is sound, but the sky is a bit overstrong without hurting the composition.

Robert G. Campbell shows two canvases which are in true merit. One, "After the Rain" (23), reveals subtle poetic feeling, and the other, "The Little Lake, Laurentian Mountains" (24), is rich in color and shows deft handling of sunlight. Paul Caron is represented by one sketch of a river landscape, which is in true color done in his well-known attractive style. Albert Cliche's four easterly landscapes are all well painted in vivid tones. F. C. Coburn, R.C.A., exhibits four pastels, and Ernest G. Miller has three water-colors of the real and unusual kind. J. E. (158), "Albee", (29), and "Evello" (40) all show a sound draughtsmanship, skillful handling of water and the use of a medium that is exceptional. The atmospheric effects are especially well shown, and the pictures show case of three miniatures beautiful tone, of which "Victory" (41a), is exquisite.

Maurice Gillen, R.C.A., has two well-painted, bold, and turbulent river waters and towering woodland in "Chute au Paron" (42), and "Cataract, Chartier River, (43). The latter shows the surging rapids. "Laurentian River" (45) shows a super sweep of winter landscape, Rita Daly, in "Spring" (46), and in "Autumn" (49), transmits sunlight effects on cliffs and water up the Otter Lake, where the artist has been. Georges Deslarios has a picture of the residence of Sir Georges Etienne Caron at Maskinonge (48), in which the coloring is sound and the lighting better than usual. Alice Desbois has done a good picture, "In the Huntsmen Returning" (57), and has drawn two grey horses lovingly in "New Gables" (58), charming sketches, including "The Flower Girl" (50), "Mending the Quay" (51), "Appledore, Devon" (52), to be noted for beauty of coloring and daintiness. Gertrude E. S. (63), a delightful pastel study of child, and "Flowers" (54), proves her right to be considered a clever colorist. In "The Old Mill" (55), there reveals warmth of coloring and considerable vigor in brushwork. James L. McKeen's "Summer Pasture" (55), and "Amouretta" (58), are well done.

Christina Harrington shows four large water-colors done in very warm and vivid tones of flowers and fruits, which recall the striking studies she exhibited at the Summer Exhibition for a few days. Mrs. Lillian Hingston shows a small but attractive study in Reds by Y. Jackson, R.C.A., has gone to unusual lengths in distorted rhythm of lines. Mrs. Percy Bourget (111), "Baffin Bay" (112), and "Early Spring in Quebec" (118) are not something, but I don't know what it is. To me, they suggest a nightmare more than anything else.

The architecture section is well filled with a variety of exhibits, including a number of photographs of grounds and gardens and public buildings. Among the etchings there is a good deal of mediocre work, but Kathleen Daisey in a fine drypoint, "Houses and Cap, P.Q." (104), William A. Drake, "H. C. Draper, M. C. D'Arcy, C. E. Turner, and J. Jeffrey Webster all show work of distinct promise, while Herbert C. Rainey is well represented in exhibits quite up to his finest standard, and Robin Watts shows four chalk drawings of children (119) to (122) that are marked by beauty of draughtsmanship, delicacy, and a definite interpretative value.

The sculpture exhibits serve to emphasize the urgent need for a higher standard in this branch of art in the province of art in general. Charles Fünemel shows two exhibits types—"Leda" (380) and "Silence" (381), the former an appealing Leda reclining, and the latter apparently a copy of an Egyptian gargoyle. Mme. E. L. de Montigny-Gigues has some attractive terra-cotta studies, W. R. Hebert, R.C.A., has a fine bust of Dr. La Sagesse and a lovely study in bronze of Miss A. C., dancer of Oslo (571). There is a fine example of S. C. in "Le Temps" (583). The most original and therefore the most interesting work among the junior artists is that shown by Miss A. C. in "The Last Chief American" (583), a study of "Boy of the Peace" (583), possessing vigor, skill in modelling, strength, and an appreciation that very few sculptors here possess.

M. Morgan-Powell.