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LONDON, CANADA

1919

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INTERESTING CHARACTERISTICS THAT MAY BECOME TRULY NATIONAL.

Canada has sent to the United States, under the auspices of its National Gallery, a collection of its representative oil paintings with the intention of revealing to Americans the progress of the Dominion in art, says the Christian Science Monitor. Canadian art, declares Mr. Eric Brown, the director of the National Gallery, in the catalogue, has developed, in the fifty short years of its existence, strongly individual and interesting characteristics that may become truly national. And he expresses the hope that this initial exhibition may prove the forerunner of a regular exchange of art between the two countries.

It so happens that St. Louis, the first American city to view the show, has seen in its city art museum, within the last three years, exhibitions of a like nature from France, Holland, Sweden and Spain. It has become accustomed, therefore, to looking for national traits and passing broad judgment. Doubly valuable, then, its judgment that the Canadian show not only makes a favorable first impression, but is able to sustain it. May Mr. Brown's hope of exchange materialize.

The chief characteristics are directness of statement, realism, beautiful and venturesome color and light, and, withal, restraint. By directness of statement is meant that the painters know what they want to say and make use of a positive technique in saying it. The statement is usually representative, sometimes decorative, but well-trained and equipped with every requisite technical device, these Canadians have set out to interpret, not the Thames at Richmond, the Bay of Naples, or the coast of Brittany, but the Canadian forest, the Canadian winter, the Canadian village, the Canadian man and woman. Accordingly, there is a recurring note of realism and naturalism leading to an attainment of optimism, constructive, and devoid of morbid reflection.

The group has mastered interpretative art, in the sense that a musician, performing well, has mastered his instrument. Some members have gone farther, creating a new beauty, but a new school, which would call for concerted progress in some previously untried use of line, light, color or form, has not been established.

The beauty in the Canadian pictures—and there is great beauty—lies in the foreign quality of being severe, with a severity that is the opposite of mere feebly pretentiousness. It is the severe beauty of the Phidias of the art of the Renaissance. It is the severe beauty of Constable, of Bonington, and of Brangwyn.

It would be too small to interpret a northern forest only from a tender standpoint. And we find in the Canadian pictures that, while the form and the line in French art, the color and the light of the best examples afford full compensation. A most interesting development this, since nearly one-half of these painters have studied in France, where the Julian Academy of Paris had a large following of them. They might have retained a Latin expression. Instead of that we find a rugged, northern quality, the technique of which corresponds with the interpretation and the theme.

Then there is the opposite type of painting, "Boats on the St. Lawrence," by H. Mabel May, exceptional in the exhibition for its classic simplicity and harmony, its grace of form. It has something of the lyric quality of Keats and of Corot. It is exquisite, tender, full of fine feeling. The design is graceful, the composition quietly graceful, without lack of naturalism in the placid blue water reflecting the softly moving clouds. But there is no struggle, such as is the rule in northern art, between substance and form. Rather substance and form, thought and feeling, are one—after the classic manner. There is nothing of the academic.

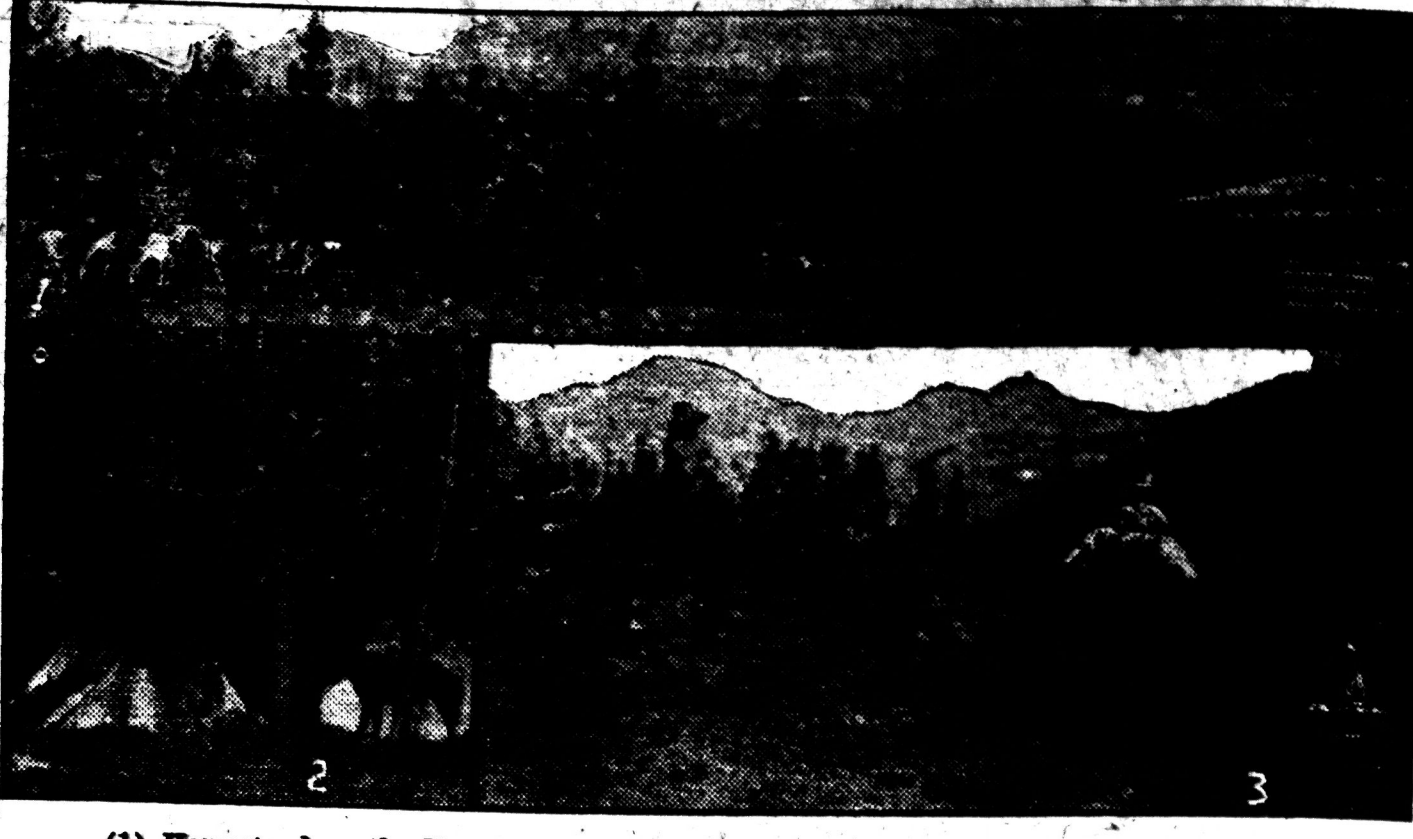
Between the vigorous "Mill Pond Floodgate," on the one hand, and the graceful "Boats on the St. Lawrence," on the other, lies the average of the exhibition, but much nearer the former, the northern style. Most representative of the whole show, therefore, is such a picture as the "Oxen Drinking," by Horatio Walker. Here is the actuating vigor, the abundance of playing light and color, the sense of strength in reserve.

But as for a new school, its best promise lies in the work of Tom Thompson, largely self-taught, of the so-called Algonquin Park school. He spent the greater part of the year alone in the Canadian forests, and he has done more than any other painter to establish, if not a national school, the foundation for one. The pigment is applied in a brick-line arrangement of strips, averaging perhaps three inches in length. Yet there is the greatest beauty of fresh and brilliant coloring and delicate atmospheres and illuminations. His "Northern River" is perhaps the best because the most original.

Maurice Cullen's "Ice Harvest" is one of the large number of snow scenes to be expected in a Canadian exhibition. Lawrence Harris contributes two equally successful snow pictures. His strength lies in a spirited use of complementary colors, producing crisp, plain-air effects, with cool shadows, brilliant sunlight, clear green skies. Of the figure pictures, perhaps the most successful is "L'Encore," three ballet dancers reappearing between the footlights and the curtain of a stage, by Arthur Crisp.

Can Be Seen 100 Miles Away. The snowy top of Mount Everest in India is plainly visible to the unaided eyes from points 107 miles distant.

A Trail Across the Rockies



(1) Homestead on the Kootenay River. (2) Camp in the forest of the Kootenay Valley. (3) Summit of the Simpson Pass—line of the Great Divide separating Alberta and British Columbia.

The first trip over the Simpson Pass through the Canadian Pacific Rockies was made by Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, in 1841, and formed part of the first recorded overland tour round the world, that is to say across the North American Continent, and by way of Siberia and Russia, occupying about nine months, and the subject of considerable literature. Jim Brewster, the famous guide and outfitter at Banff, discovered the fallen tree on the summit of the Pass on which the travellers left their record.

Fired by the ambition to cross this pass, I set out one day this summer, with two guides, ten ponies and camping outfit and supplies for 12 or seven days. Jim Brewster sent these over from Banff to Invermere at the headwaters of the Columbia Valley, where I had promised to wait for them. Close to Invermere are the remains of Kootenai House, an outpost of the Northwest Trading Company established by David Thompson in 1808. Now there is a comfortable little tourist hotel, much appreciated by motorists who use the excellent Government road through the Upper Columbia Valley.

On our first day's ride we stopped off for a swim at the hot radiating water springs of Sinclair Canyon, where St. John Harmsworth, brother of the famous Lord Northcliffe, and himself proprietor of the still more famous Perrier water, built a concrete bathing pool under the springs which pours its naturally warm water out of the rock. At night we found shelter in a homesteader's cabin, the owner of which was away at the war and hospitable enough to leave the latch loose. Next day breakfasted on the level tundra, which did not exceed fourteen paces in width, filling our kettles for this one lonely meal at once from the crystal sources of the Columbia and the Saskatchewan, while these white feeders of two opposite oceans, murmuring over their beds of mossy stones, as if to bid each other farewell, could hardly fail to stir our minds to the sublimity of the scene.

tains, the common presence of the same snow wreaths, there was this remarkable difference of temperature that the source of the Columbia showed 40°, while that of the Saskatchewan raised the mercury to 53°, the thermometer meanwhile striking as high as 71° in the shade.

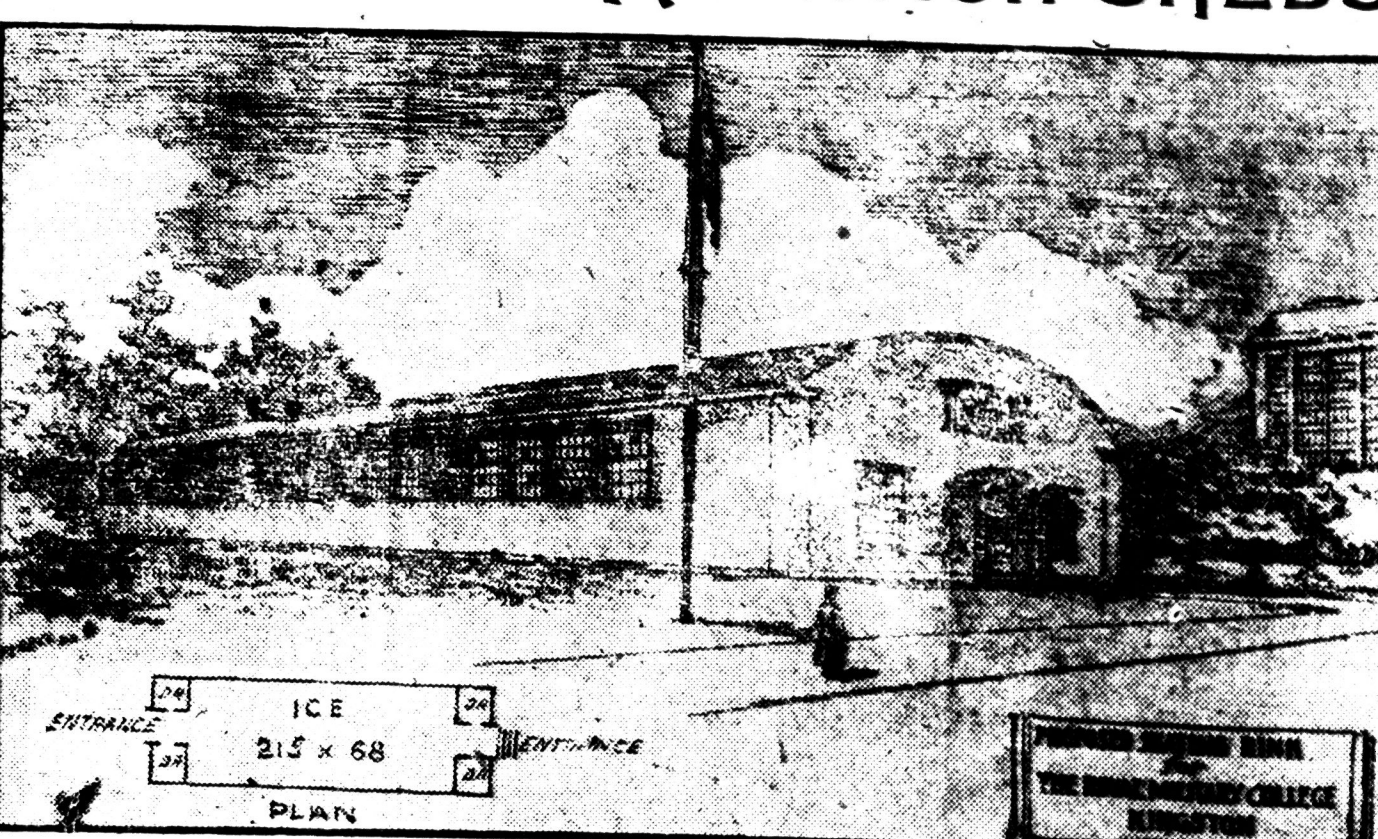
"From the vicinity of perpetual snow, we estimated the elevation of the height of land to be seven or eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, while the surrounding peaks appeared to rise nearly half that altitude above our heads."

We ourselves found the snow all gone, and our horses found sweet and ample pasture on an Alpine meadow. As we looked back from the Great Divide upon the mountains of the Selkirk, we had as fine a panorama as any artist could desire—rugged outlines capped and fringed with perpetual snow.

The Banff side of the Summit comes within the jurisdiction of the Dominion Government, and its Superintendent of Parks was good enough to provide us with a trail which really was a trail. To the right up Healy Creek we had a glimpse of Mount Asanabine, the giant of these giant mountains—only a glimpse however, for in a minute his head was caught in a turban of clouds. Thence without adventure except for a plague of mosquitoes we reached the C.P.R. Hotel at Banff, alive with summer tourists who found in our cavalcade a strange subject for innumerable snapshots.

The fishing, I may say in passing, which one gets on such a trip, is of the very best. Every creek, every pool seems to be stocked with trout, all immediately about the nature of the fly. Brown Hackle and Caddis are always deadly. The red flies such as Parachute "elle" do not seem to take so well in these waters. There were both Dolly Varden and Steelhead to our credit on the Simpson, averaging a little over a pound. In the Kootenay the trout ran up to two and three pounds and were very tame, though shy in the middle of the day.—J. M. G.

NEW USE FOR AVIATION SHEDS



PLAN

AFTER many years of waiting, a covered skating rink has been cured for the Gentlemen Cadets at the Royal Military College at Kingston, and the acquisition of this building will give a great impulse to our national game—"hockey." Hitherto the Royal Military College hockey teams have had to get along the best they could, using the open ice on the lake and occasionally the city rink at Kingston. These limitations interfered materially with the quality of the game. On the demobilization of the Royal Air Force in Canada and the abandonment of the aviation camps at different points some suitable buildings, originally designed for and used as flight sheds for aeroplanes, became available, and through the kindness of Sir Joseph Flavelle, Bart., Chairman of the Imperial Munitions Board, under whose direction these aviation camps were originally established, two of the flight sheds, each 120 feet long by 68 feet wide, were secured to form the basis of the new covered skating rink. The many friends of the Royal Military College were not slow in taking advantage of this opportunity in coming forward to assist in carrying out the idea. The Canadian National Railways, through the courtesy of Mr. D. B. Hanna, its president, and the Grand Trunk Railway System, through the courtesy of its president, Mr. Howard G. Kelley, have undertaken to free-freight the material of the sheds from Camp Mohawk to the point nearest to the Royal Military College, to Kingston. Sir Herbert S. Holt, who is deeply interested in everything that makes for the welfare of the Royal Military College, has generously financed the undertaking, and a contract for the removal and reconstruction of the flight sheds above referred to, has been let to the Kingston Construction Company, who now have the work in hand. The Minister of Militia and Defence, Mr. James D. Stewart, has graciously granted the site within the college grounds on which the sheds will be erected. The General, who has been a generous benefactor of the college, has received many congratulations from a host of friends interested in the work of the college, who have taken charge of all the work in connection with the carrying out of the scheme. The rink, when completed, will be substantially as shown in the above illustration. The main building will be 240 feet by 98 feet wide, and the height from the ice level will be 18 feet. Commodious dressing and locker rooms, 25 feet square, will be provided at one end, over which a gallery for spectators, capable of seating 300 persons, will be provided. The main sheet of ice will be 215 feet by 68 feet wide and this will, in the opinion of well-known hockey experts (Messrs. Maughan, Hearn and Col. Walter Maughan) make a most satisfactory hockey rink. The building will be well lighted by windows all round and with electric lights for the evening. The outside will be neatly finished in cement paint and present a generally attractive appearance. The originators of this project have received many congratulations from a host of friends interested in the work of the college.