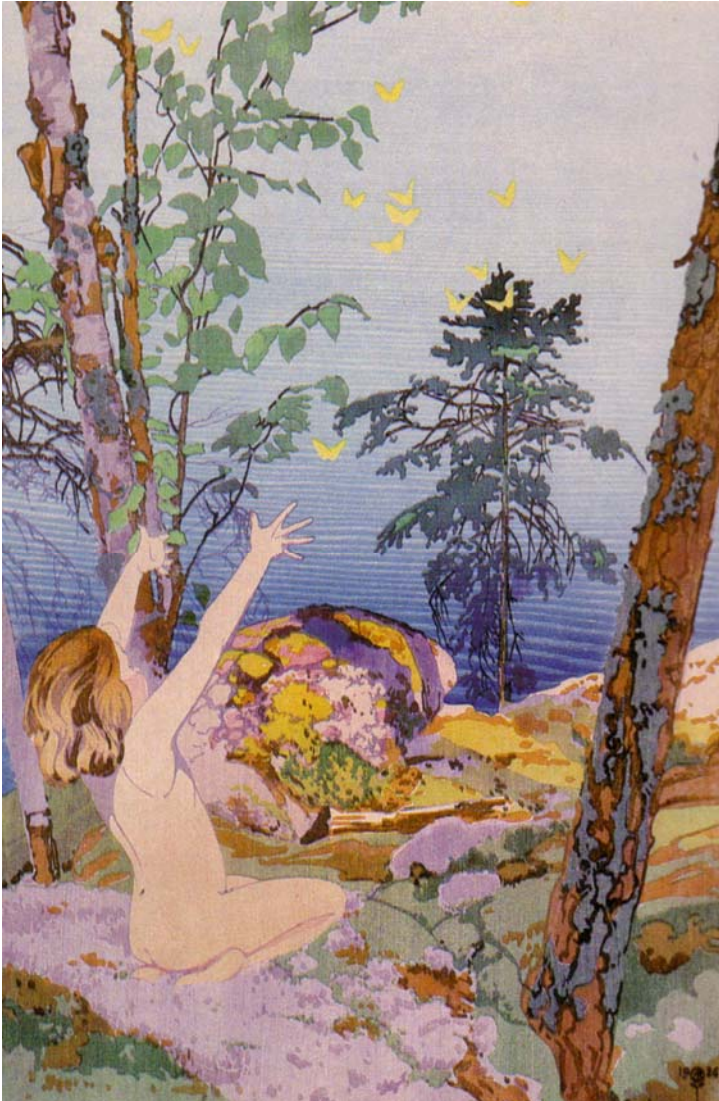

PHILLIPS IN PRINT

*The Selected Writings of Walter J. Phillips
On Canadian Nature and Art*



Throughout his lifetime the painter and print-maker Walter J. Phillips (1884-1962) found the written word a necessary complement to his art. From 1926 to 1941 while in residence in Winnipeg he contributed a regular column to the *Winnipeg Tribune*, published extensively in other news papers and journals, and wrote a number of (manuscript works (which he often cannibalized when he wanted something for printing). Phillips usually wrote about art and artists, and he had strong opinions on everyone and everything which came to his attention. Phillips was critical of most modern art , art critics, and the dominance of Toronto. He objected to the Group of Seven's painting becoming *the* Canadian style, and, as an alternative, promoted the work of a number of artists in western Canada. He firmly believed that the public was important to the artist, and sought to inform it.

These writings of Phillips have been selected and edited by Maria Tippett and Douglas Cole. They offer a fascinating glimpse into the aesthetics and mechanics of an important and beloved artist, but also illuminate the art world, especially in Manitoba and Western Canada, in the critical formative years between the two world wars. The editors provide an introduction which places Phillips in historical and critical perspective, and have included a number of representative illustrations, three in colour, from Phillips' own work.

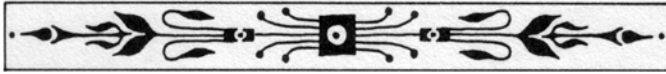
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Together Tippett and Cole have written the award-winning *From Desolation to Splendour: Changing Perceptions of the British Columbia Landscape* (1977).



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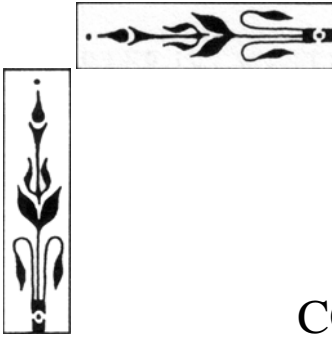
*The Selected Writings of
Walter J. Phillips
on Canadian
Nature and
Art*

Selected and Edited by
Maria Tippett and Douglas Coles



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To Mary Adamson who introduced us to Walter J. Phillips
and to Valerie Thornton who taught us
the craft and beauty
of the print



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INTRODUCTION



THROUGHOUT MUCH OF HIS LIFETIME Walter Phillips wrote almost as much as he painted or pulled prints. Casual articles in the *Winnipeg Evening Tribune* grew into his “Art and Artists” column which appeared regularly from 1926 to 1941. He contributed articles to Canadian and foreign journals, the last appearing in 1951. A book-length manuscript, *The Technique of the Color Wood-Cut*, was published in 1926 by Brown-Robertson of New York. Other writings, most notably “Wet Paint,” a singular manuscript on watercolour sketching, written in the late twenties, never found a publisher, although parts were subsequently cannibalized by Phillips for his column in *The Winnipeg Tribune*. Similarly, his intention to publish a collection of his newspaper articles remained unrealized.

This volume selects a number of Phillips’ essays and articles on nature, art, and the wood-cut. The selections introduce us to the sketcher sensitive to his varied Canadian surroundings, to the observer of Canadian art during one of its most creative periods, and to the teacher of the technique of the wood-cut. More than anything, in lucid and almost informal prose they reveal Phillips himself—his love for and his commitment to nature and its visual and literary interpretation.

Walter Joseph Phillips was born, the second of seven children of the Reverend John Phillips and Sophia Blackett Phillips, on 25 October 1884 at Barton on the Humber river across from Hull, England. The son of a poor Welsh farmer, John Phillips had as a youth been converted to

Primitive Methodism. In the Connection's Cardiff chapel his "unusual promise of pulpit power at once became evident," and he was quickly called to preach. A close student of the scripture, John was also a man of quick discernment and intellectual breadth. His sermons were "often charged with a noble, moving eloquence," and no branch of literature fell entirely outside his interests, although theology, philosophy and logic

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formed his favorite reading.¹ His ministry was to the towns of the Midlands, the heartland of British industrialism. The working class operative and independent merchant or manufacturer provided the converts and congregations for the Primitive Methodist circuits. The daughter of a wool merchant, Sophia came from Leeds. She was a woman of culture who shared in the comradeship of her husband's ministry through visitations to the sick, the teaching of the young, and the writing of devotional verse.² The North of England and the Midlands, especially the valleys of the Humber and the Trent, were thus the scene of Walter Phillips' early years, and literature and theology the cultural nourishment of his boyhood.

The boy moved with his father and family from manse to manse, from Barton to Louth to Haworth to Cleethorpes to Burton-on-Trent. His early education would have been in the board schools of the 1870s and in the Sunday schools of the Connection. Book illustrations at home served as his introduction to art, and his mother encouraged an appreciation of paintings by describing to him the fine collection she had known in her father's house. His first formal instruction in art was an evening class at Barton, "a year spent in a new and exciting world."⁴ At age fourteen, his education took a more defined turn. He was enrolled by his father in Bourne College, a Primitive Methodist school established on a nineteen acre site at Quinton, five miles from Birmingham, to prepare the sons of ministers and members for commercial and professional careers in an atmosphere where they would "never be ashamed of the form of religion professed by their parents." Primitive Methodist collegiate schools aimed at the development of "healthy, manly, self-reliant young fellows, braced for life's tussle," and Phillips was taught such practical subjects as Pitman's shorthand.⁷ Although his father never countenanced an artist's career, that disfavour did not include the applied and decorative arts. When Reverend Phillips entered his son at Bourne, he simultaneously enrolled Walter in Birmingham's Municipal School of Art. Four afternoons a week for the next three years, Walter Phillips received instruction in a multitude of courses ranging from drawing, painting, and modelling the human figure from cast and life, to enamel painting, wood carving, and lithography.⁵

The Birmingham School was the largest in the United Kingdom. While it taught fine art, its curriculum was consciously complimentary to the needs of Birmingham for artisans, architects, and commercial designers. Here Phillips learned Craft as well as Art. His interest in fine art was also refined during these three years by his study of the Nettlefield

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Bequest of David Cox watercolours at the Birmingham Art Gallery. These rich collections of early English watercolours and of the Pre-Raphaelite and William Morris movements exercised a formative influence on the young man who left Birmingham for his first job at the turn of the new century.

Walter went in 1901 to Great Yarmouth in Norfolk to serve as “usher” or assistant instructor at Yarmouth College, a small, struggling preparatory school for boys. He was hired, no doubt, because of the impressive scores he achieved on the kingdom-wide state school examinations. His overall standing had been thirteenth, with special distinction in shorthand and geology and, remarkably, first place standing in both drawing and natural history.⁶ At Yarmouth Phillips taught everything “from Latin to gymnastics,” while himself taking evening classes at the Municipal School of Art and Science.⁷ The Yarmouth period lasted only a year. His uncle, H J. Reynolds, an employee of the Transvaal department of education, suggested that he might find wider horizons on the Veldt, where Sir Alfred Milner’s reconstruction of South Africa had opened new opportunities.

Phillips took third-class passage to the Cape. Over the next five years he worked at a variety of positions. For several months he was an assistant in a country school in the Pretoria district, then laboured as a shorthand writer and typist for firms in Pretoria and Krugersdorp and finally as a draughtsman, leveler and field assistant for a surveyor. His stenographic skills helped gain him a six month stint as a staff reporter on Kimberley’s *Diamond Fields Advertiser*. He seems even to have worked, alongside his brother Arthur, as a diamond digger. There was little room for art in the Transvaal; only his practical and commercial training was of value in that pioneer society, still recovering from the Boer War. He returned to England in 1907 scarcely wealthier than when he had left.

At home he briefly combined the practical with the artistic, finding employment as a commercial artist in Manchester, then in London. For the first time he was working as a professional artist. Soon he secured a position as art master at Bishop Woodsworth School in the cathedral city of Salisbury; his future was sealed. The Bishop’s School appointment may be seen as a turning point “from which onward the road begins to clear and a congenial distance unfold.”⁸ Phillips now had plenty of time for painting and “developed a style” of his own—that clear, crystalline use of watercolour’s bloom that reinforces the outline of his watercolours and makes them so transmutable into colour wood-cuts.⁹ Another characteristic feature of Phillips—his quiet yet profound sensitivity to nature—must also have matured at Salisbury. Much of his

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youth had been spent in the bleak industrial Midlands, but he always recalled vividly the time at Howarth where as a child he was let loose to pick bilberries among the heather of the Yorkshire moors. Even Birmingham was not far from the beauty of Derby and Shropshire. The ancient see of Salisbury certainly lay close to some of the most picturesque scenery in southern England. Summer holidays gave time for extended excursions and with his London friend Ernest S. Carlos, he often travelled to Somerset, the West Country, the Scillys and north to the Yorkshire Wolds and Flamborough Head. Spring and autumn were spent closer to home, in Wilts, Dorset or Hampshire, as part of a rhythm of summer coastal sketching and inland work in spring and fall. Local exhibitions brought favourable notices and sales; The *Pier, Newlyn* was selected by the 1911 jury for exhibition at the Royal Academy annual show, Phillips' first (and only) contribution to Burlington House.

Another event made the Salisbury years a watershed. On Boxing Day, 1910, he married a former scholarship student, Gladys Pitcher, of the neighboring town of Wylke. At a ceremony in the cathedral's beautiful early Gothic Lady Chapel, Phillips began a companionship which would last the rest of his life. Two years later the young couple, now blessed with a baby, John, quit Salisbury for Canada. They went to Winnipeg for "no particular reason."¹⁰ Phillips had relatives in the Dominion and he once said, perhaps not entirely in jest, that they picked Winnipeg because it was equidistant from those on the West Coast and in the East. From the standpoint of an unknown artist in a new country, Winnipeg was not a particularly favourable choice.

The Winnipeg to which Phillips came in the autumn of 1913 was Canada's third largest city, but it remained at most a regional metropole that could not rival Montreal, let alone the increasingly dominant Toronto, as a national centre. The prairie boom still lingered, however. A year before Phillips' arrival, Winnipeg had established a Civic Art Gallery and Museum on Main and Water streets with an affiliated Art School under the purview of the Glasgow-trained artist Alexander Musgrove. An Art Club emerged the following year and the construction of a grandiose Parliament Building requiring artists and sculptors for its decoration was underway. The commercial firm of Bridgen's employed an impressive group of artists whose camaraderie and interest in the fine arts was not unlike those associated with Toronto's Grip Ltd. While the number of good artists in Winnipeg was small, it did include Musgrove, Eric Bergman, the Bridgens, and later Charles Comfort, LeMoine FitzGerald, and Franz Johnston. There was some patronage available,

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notably through Richardson Brothers' art shop and private collectors such as MacDiarmid, W.J. Bulman and A.A. Heaps. Yet, compared to Toronto or Montreal, the arts infrastructure in Winnipeg was thin and weak. While Phillips may later have regretted the choice of Winnipeg—he certainly began to advise young artists that if they were to consider their own interests, they must “gravitate” toward Toronto—he had chosen it as his base and did all he could to ply his profession there.”

Phillips immediately secured employment as a stenographer with Dominion Bridge, then successfully interviewed for a teaching position at the new St. John's Technical High School on the city's northside. His practical training from Bourne was probably as useful as his artistic background, for he taught commercial as well as art subjects. “Except about one percent,” he recalled, the students were “not especially interested in drawing or painting.”¹² He did find one artistic associate at the school, John Jones, a trained architect who had arrived a year earlier from England and whose later venture into printmaking would be under Phillips' guidance. The city itself was “a likeable place full of good company;” Fred Brigden, the head of the Brigden commercial engraving firm and a polished watercolour artist, became “a great source of inspiration and encouragement.”“ LeMoine FitzGerald, just at the beginning of his notable career, not only co-exhibited with him, but together they painted scenery and designed programs for the Winnipeg Little Theatre. The two men frequently sketched together. Taking a streetcar to the limits of the city, they would in winter don snowshoes and walk along the Assiniboine River. Another friend with whom he shared exhibition space was Cyril Barraud, a recent arrival from Britain who introduced Phillips to etching in 1915. When Barraud left the city to join the CEF in 1917, Phillips acquired his press, plates, paper, and tools. Two years later Richardson Brothers sold his first etchings. The National Gallery was not slow in recognizing the value of his water-colours; it purchased two in 1916. The Civic Art Gallery gave him a solo exhibition a year later. In the summers of 1917 and 1919 he taught summer classes at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

Phillips easily transferred his love for natural beauty to the Canadian landscape. Though the colour and atmosphere were different from any spot he had known at home, the four years in South Africa and his various sketching grounds in England had accustomed him to geographic variation and diverse season, mood, and form. The best sketching ground he wrote, was “wherever I happen to be.” Locale did not matter: “It is light I paint: the sun, and its corollary, colour.”⁴ His earliest sketching

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ground was the Lake of the Woods where he gloried in the “grotesque but graceful curves” of the jack pine, in the interspersions of wild cherry, birch, and poplar, the open sky and the granite rock.’ S Later he extended his grounds to the Muskoka district of Ontario and westward to the prairies, the Rocky Mountains, and the West Coast.

While watercolours remained his primary medium, Phillips had since childhood nourished an ambition to make prints. He learned etching from Barraud, but, after creating several sets between 1917 and 1919, he became dissatisfied. “My thoughts,” he later wrote, “were in color.”¹⁶

He experimented with aquatint, which created shading and could give colour, and with lithography, a medium susceptible to colour. For reasons unstated, he never pursued these paths. A capable carver since Birmingham, he turned instead to the wood-block, an obsolescent European medium undergoing a western revival under the influence of Japanese example. At age thirty-two he attempted, on his own, to produce a colour wood-block print. “The beautiful simplicity of the technique of wood-working dawned upon me one day,” he wrote. Planning a piece of cherry wood, he cut a key block and three others for colour and, “with the aid of a weird and clumsy contrivance that represented my conception of the Japanese method of registration,” he produced *Winter*, a very satisfying result.¹⁷

At the outset Phillips was experimenting in independent isolation. Although the international colour wood-cut revival was in full swing, the writing of its major practioners had not yet reached Winnipeg. Phillips was thus unaware of F Morley Fletcher’s *Wood-Block Printing; a Description of the Craft of Wood-Cutting and Color Printing based on the Japanese Practice* published in 1917. He had to learn by gleaning what he could of Japanese practice and by his own invention.¹⁸ He was inspired by a 1913 *Studio* article by Malcolm C. Salaman and by a later piece written by Allen W Seaby, but neither constituted a manual of technique.¹⁹ “I had, therefore, all the fun of experimenting blindly more or less, which perhaps fired my enthusiasm.”²⁰

Although he continued with a number of etchings over the next few years, Phillips had found in wood the print medium that most fascinated him: the unique sheen of colour, the sharp, defined shapes and variable lines, the surface texture that could be obtained from the impression of the wood grain, and the smooth tonal graduation. Colour wood-cuts were intimate, holding a charm, freshness, vigor, and originality. They complemented his love of skill, techniques, and strong sense of design. The need for patience and craft absorbed him. He was undeterred by

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the repetition of multiple editions: each inking brought variations—"no two impressions were ever alike."²¹

Almost unknowingly, Phillips was joining a twentieth-century revival. The colour wood-cut revival which reached its greatest height of popularity in the 1920s had begun in pre-war Britain with Malcolm Salaman, Morley Fletcher, J.D. Batten, Allen Seaby, and William Giles. They reduced the traditional Japanese *ukiyo-e* methods of producing wood-cuts—employing a separate designer, cutter, and printer—to the work of a single artist. The technique did not come any more easily to them than to Phillips, but they had the benefit of an old Smithsonian Institution article by T. Tokuno and some handbooks on Japanese prints issued by the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1910 and 1913.²² The publication of their results led Phillips into contact and encouragement. He had six of his own prints featured in a Studio issue of 1919, the National Gallery of Canada made a purchase, and by 1924 he had secured the Storrow Prize in the California Printmakers International Exhibition.²³ In these few years of work, Phillips had vaulted from obscurity in Winnipeg to national and international recognition as an elected Associate of the Royal Canadian Academy, and as a member of the leading printmakers societies in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. He had produced some forty-five prints in editions of 50, 100, even 150, and was selling through Brownhead Coutts in London and Brown-Robertson in New York as well as in Canada.

Despite his activity he still felt isolated and considered his work imperfect. He wanted to learn more about the technique of registering the colour blocks to the key block and more especially about papers. He was still coating his wood-cut paper as if it were for a watercolour painting instead of glazing it with the Japanese size of powered pigment and starch. He also wanted to meet the people at the centre of the wood-cut movement in England. He therefore obtained a year's leave of absence from St. John's School and, with money from the sale of his Winnipeg house and his work in New York, he took his family, now including five children, to England.

In England Phillips was the guest of William Giles, who introduced him to Malcolm Salaman, Martin Hardie, Campbell Dodgeson, and others associated with the newly-founded Original Print Magazine. There was ample time for sketching during the family's six-month stay at Wylde in Wiltshire and the three months they lived on Cleeve Hill in the Cotswolds, near Cheltenham where his parents had retired. But the high point of the sojourn abroad was Phillips' meeting with the Japanese

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master of the colour print, Yoshirigi Urushibara. Giles took him to Urushibara's Chelsea studio in London, where he learned how to size paper and how the Japanese registered it on the wood-block.

When Phillips returned to Canada a year later, he possessed a greater knowledge of the technique of printing and was now in personal touch with the men around whom the revival revolved. After another year at St. John's School, he resigned to teach with Musgrove for a year, but mostly to devote more time to his own watercolours and prints. In 1926 he expanded his sketching ground, making his first trip to the Rockies with Tom MacLean and Eric Bergman. Over the next five years his output was prodigious. He produced three folios of colour wood-cuts: *Ten Canadian Color Prints* in 1927, *The Canadian Scene: Seven Colour Prints and a Dissertation* in 1928, and *An Essay in Wood-Cuts* in 1930. He began a regular column, "Art and Artists" for the *Winnipeg Tribune*, completed one manuscript, "Wet Paint," on watercolour technique, and published another, *The Technique of the Color Wood-Cut*. In 1926 he helped form the Manitoba Society of Artists and organized several exhibitions of western Canadian art. He continued to sell his wood-cuts through his London and New York dealers, adding the British Empire Art Company with Toronto and Chicago offices-to his outlets, while maintaining his exhibition schedule and winning prizes in Canadian and international competitions. In addition to all of these activities, he found time to inspire others, among them H.V. Fanshaw, Musgrove, and Bergman, to make colour wood-block prints. In 1929 he produced his first wood-engraving.

The period between Phillips' return to Winnipeg and the Depression was the time of his greatest output, establishing his reputation as Canada's finest wood-cut artist, a reputation that helped to sustain him through the Depression. Phillips was, nevertheless, not entirely happy. The years immediately after his return to Winnipeg were depressing. "This has been a bad year," he wrote Harry McCurry at the National Gallery. He had been considering leaving Winnipeg for some time and "now we are more than ever anxious to be out of it."²⁴ There were disputes with the old art school and gallery committee, and then with his own Society of Manitoba Artists, that left him "heartily sick of consorting with the morons who profess a regard for art in this city."²⁵ He planned to move to Toronto in 1929, but he found Winnipeg "a hard place to get away from."²⁶ It would be a full twelve years before he left. Phillips miraculously survived the 1930s, supporting his wife and six children by almost every means conceivable to an artist. He bartered

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prints for family necessities, he illustrated books, he wrote for the *Winnipeg Evening Tribune* and other journals, painted murals, provided pictures for hotel rooms and calendars, and gave lectures. In 1936 he produced another folio, *Winter Woodcuts*. Not every scheme through which Phillips sought to hold family, body, and soul together worked. The National Gallery of Canada was uninterested in his suggestion of subsidizing a Canadian art journal of which he would be editor. He could find no publisher for three manuscripts entitled "An Artist Holds Forth." While he earned enough to exist through his energy and willingness to ply his art to various mediums, it was "a harrowing situation."²⁷ Life was "from hand to mouth," "a heartbreaking business."²⁸ "The bailiffs nearly got us a week or two ago," he told McCurry in 1933, "but I put on an auction sale of old watercolours and cleared \$1,200.00 which kept out creditors at bay."²⁹ With so many prints and watercolours "impossible to sell" the auctions became annual affairs.³⁰ Election to full membership in the Royal Canadian Academy in 1933, honorable mention in international wood-cut exhibitions in Warsaw in 1933 and 1936 could not diminish for Phillips the feeling that "I'm getting older and getting nowhere" in a Winnipeg that was growing "more moth-eaten."³¹

In 1941 Phillips accepted a teaching position at Calgary's Provincial Institute of Technology and Art. A year earlier he had enjoyed the first of twenty splendid summers teaching at the Banff School of Art. Finances improved, but perhaps because of the commitments of teaching, he never returned to the prolific productivity of the twenties, either in print-making or in writing. He continued to try to boost Canadian art, suggesting that the National Gallery produce a film about colour wood-cuts, even providing the outline for a script. He also proposed a scheme for demonstrating the making of colour wood-cuts so "that the whole of Canada might be convinced" of their value." But the National Gallery had no interest. With the war-generated economic prosperity, sales improved. In 1944 he had good exhibitions in Toronto and Montreal which "sold enough to buy a small house and a couple of cars."³² "But the colour-print revival was past. *The Original Print Magazine* had not survived more than three numbers, many of the original motivators in the movement were dead, and Phillips himself contributed less to international print exhibitions and magazines. In 1946 he concentrated, in addition to his teaching in Calgary, on building a home near Banff. He moved there two years later.

He now only taught summers at Banff, something that had from the outset been "a grand experience."³⁴ As Duncan Campbell Scott has

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pointed out, “the daily walk to the art school, the change of scene and contact with students was in all ways stimulating.”³⁵ He continued to teach there until 1960, when his eyesight, which had begun to fail in 1957, made further sketching and teaching impossible. Gladys and Walter Phillips had already moved to Victoria. They travelled to Europe in the summer of 1958, a holiday shadowed by a visit to the grave of their second son, Ivan, killed in Holland in 1945. The following years, until his death in 1962, were beset by illness and depression. As he told one interviewer, teaching in the day had “meant working at night and misusing my eyes, putting too heavy a strain on them.”³⁶ There could have been no more tragic a twilight for someone with Phillips’ appreciation of the intimacies of nature and the ability to transmit that appreciation to others.

The keystone of Phillips’ artistic oeuvre was his English art heritage. He had been raised in an England which admired-as it still does-the watercolours of DeWint, Cox, Cotman, and Turner. Phillips absorbed this English watercolour tradition as a youth and it always remained his primary point of reference. His mature watercolour style was akin to the contemporary developments of that tradition, whether reflected in Britons like Martin Hardie and Russell Flint or Canadians like F .H. Brigden and Frank Carmichael.

Tradition was a major theme in Phillips’ conception of art. It meant a great deal to him, and even (perhaps especially) when confronted by modernist movements which deplored its stultifying effects, he refused to view “tradition” as a word of abuse. It was this temperamental respect for the past which inclined him toward his chosen media of watercolour and wood-cut. With the watercolour tradition of England, Phillips combined the similar Japanese wood-cut tradition of Hiroshige, Hokusai, and Utamoro, artists of the great *ukiyo-e* school of colour wood-cuts. As with his watercolours, the Japanese way was adapted by Phillips to a contemporary style comparable to other participants like William Giles, Allan Sealy, and Eric Bergman, in the Anglo-American wood-cut revival of his era.

The chosen media of watercolour painting, carved wood-block and wood-engraving which he often pursued as well, all put a high premium upon skill and technique. They required patience, practice, and craft. Phillips was absorbed and fascinated by craft. His critical writings abound with comments upon the technique both of early English watercolourists and of its contemporary practitioners, and his single published book was devoted to an exposition of the technique of the colour wood-cut.

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Absorbed as he was by process, he was not reactionary in its application; while submitting willingly to the aesthetic limitations of the traditions in which he worked, he experimented with technical adaptations and sometimes stretched the wood medium to its practical limits. Yet tradition and technique *did* set boundaries for Phillips. He was not prepared to be a bold innovator. He considered it a “misconception that to be modern or progressive in art, one must depart from tradition, or entirely ignoring it, start from scratch.”³⁷

The influences behind his subject matter are similar. Phillips’ formative years were spent in a handful of English countries from Cornwall to York, providing him with a deep reverence for nature and landscape. He grew up sharing that quiet yet profound sensitivity to natural phenomenon that is so much a part of the English character. He admired nature’s beauty and as an amateur naturalist, understood much of its inner workings. Not surprisingly he found art an outlet for this love. The conjunction was a happy one. “The beauty and the wonder of Nature,” he wrote, were “as alluring as the pursuit of Art and made of me a landscape painter.”³⁸

The love of natural beauty was always Phillips’ touchstone and he found Canada itself diverse in mood and season. He became a sensitive visual and literary recorder of such variation, whether among city trees or over prairie distances, whether in the clear austerity of the Rockies or along the misty sombre channels of British Columbia’s coast. A mood of gentle reverence, a love of intimacy, subtlety, and tranquility, pervaded his sensitivity to nature. He loved nature’s understatement as much as her drama. While he revelled in spectacular sunsets, he found that the opposite sky disclosed a subtler beauty. One could easily miss the majestic clouds that rose in the east in a preoccupation with the western sunset’s blaze. A stranger might be impressed only with the monotony of the prairies, he once wrote, ‘but acquaintance reveals aspects of quiet beauty which never fail to charm.’³⁹ Similarly, the Lake of the Woods country was distressingly flat, but it possessed “a wealth of interesting detail that appeals with an intimacy which makes every object a possible shrine for beauty.”⁴⁰ Even amidst the dramatic spectacle of the Rocky Mountains he frequently turned his attention to the delicate and the intimate—the saxifrage, lichen, or fireweed in a swirl of mist. Within this quiet nature, man’s presence was welcome. Man was not necessarily an intruder. A boatman, a hiker, even the lithe figure of a child, gave increased meaning to a scene. “A landscape without a wisp of smoke above the trees” was no more welcome in art than to a man lost in the wilderness.⁴¹

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A temperament of tradition, an inclination to technique, and a quiet sensitivity to nature and to man's place in it controlled Phillips in his work. Despite his competence, however, Phillips never emerged as more than a minor figure in his lifetime, and his reputation remains outside the mainstream of art historical scholarship and of art criticism in this country. The handbooks of Canadian art tell us much. Newton MacTavish's *The Fine Arts in Canada* published in 1925, simply catalogues Phillips' existence through the category of "others are...." William Colgate's *Canadian Art*, which appeared in 1943, does give him a generous paragraph, but Graham McInnis' 1950 book of the same title reverted to MacTavish's "others are" approach. More recently he has received decidedly minor notice in J. Russell Harper's *Painting in Canada*, while Dennis Reid's *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* names him only in connection with Winnipeggers LeMoine FitzGerald and Charles Comfort. Charles C. Hill's *Canadian Painting in the Thirties* misses him entirely. At least as significant, Peter Mellon's lavish *Landmarks of Canadian Painting* does not include any of his work within its purview. Terry Fenton and Karen Wilkin similarly omit him from their *Modern Painting in Canada*.⁴²

Phillips is, of course, not totally ignored. He may be found in regional treatments, in a slight but sensitive monograph published by the poet Duncan Campbell Scott in 1947, in a recent National Gallery exhibition and catalogue by Michael J. Gibbon-though even that show was mostly a circuit one touring small, usually western, galleries-and most recently in *The Tranquility and the Turbulence*, Roger Boulet's lavish 1981 bouquet.⁴³ Phillips' woodcuts command astonishing prices and are enormously attractive to small collectors, especially in the West and for those who could not really be called collectors. But he was and is outside the mainstream, a minor and peripheral figure in the established breviary of Canadian art. Phillips' limited reputation raises serious questions about his stature as an artist at the same time that it poses problems about the nature of Canada's artistic past, both the mainstream and its contexts. The limits of Phillips' reputation are explicable on several grounds-personality, media, locality, and artistic content and style. At a personal level Phillips' life and character did not lend themselves to mythic treatment. The personalities and careers of Emily Carr and Tom Thomson allow heroic dramatization and have become intertwined with Canada's own epic. David Milne, even A.Y Jackson, led lives which can more easily captivate the imagination. By comparison, Phillips was conventional, prosaic, and pedestrian. He lived a normal, orderly, even bourgeois life, remaining happily married and supporting a large family.

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His chief recreation was bridge (at which, incidentally, he and Gladys excelled). "Because I belong to the conservative class, dress as other men, visit the barber at regular intervals, and behave, I hope, in a rational manner," he wrote, "I am frequently made to feel a fraud."⁴⁴

Phillips' chosen media has also hampered his reputation. He worked almost exclusively in watercolour, wood-cut and wood-engraving—the "minor media" of the twentieth century. The bulk of his production is small in size and paper. He produced little in oil, certainly no big machines. The preference of art scholarship and art criticism has been for oil and for size. Large finished canvasses are major works, while wood-cuts are not.

Although personality and media were factors in keeping Phillips out of the mainstream, locality was also important. During his most productive years Toronto was the dominant and dominating centre of anglo-Canadian culture. It had an established public art gallery, at least four art organizations, a long-established art-school, several large commercial graphic firms, and major annual exhibitions at the Canadian National Exposition, and the Ontario Society of Artists, as well as biennial appearances of the Royal Canadian Academy exhibition. Moreover, it had wealth for both public and private patronage. Not least of its advantages was its access to a vitalized National Gallery of Canada under the directorship of the energetic Eric Brown, which while located in Ottawa, was long under the commanding influence of a Toronto banker, Sir Edmund Walker, the chairman of its board. Toronto was, as Phillips was to learn, Canada's "largest and most vociferous" art centre; as he put it, "broadly speaking, Canadian art and the art of Toronto are almost synonymous terms for exhibition purposes."⁴⁵ He may have pronounced it "a hole," but he recognized its importance as a centre of patronage, exhibition, and public recognition.⁴⁶

The final, perhaps decisive, factor in Phillips reputation, contemporary and posthumous, was his subject and style—the art itself. At precisely the time that Phillips was settling in Winnipeg, the Group of Seven was emerging in Toronto as the major force in Canadian art, imprinting upon its mainstream a subject matter, a style, and an ideological ethos into which Phillips could only ambiguously fit. Phillips' quiet perception of nature and man stood in contrast to the view which the Group of Seven embraced and pushed to dominance. Gentle tranquility, intimate beauty, and man's presence had little place in the Group of Seven's *terre sauvage* conception of the nature of Canadian landscape. In the raw and unhumanized landscape of northern Ontario they found "bold and massive" settings of "truly epic

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grandeur” where there was “not timid play of subtleties.” The landscape they selected was “rugged and stern,” “untamed-perhaps untamable.” Man was conspicuously absent from this silent and solitary landscape. “This land,” Arthur Lismer wrote, “has never been tamed by man: it only puts up with man; man has no governance here.”⁴⁷ This view of nature was an aesthetic revolution in landscape perception. Although essentially new to painting, it appealed to the emotional needs of the newly urbanized upper classes of Toronto reflexively seeking to find natural roots in recreation and leisure.⁴⁸ It was an artistic revolution in which Phillips could be no more than a fellow-traveller. Conditioned by his own view of nature, he stood apart from some of the basic postulates of the Group of Seven’s aesthetics of Canadian landscape.

Phillips could admire those features of the Group’s work which were common to his own. He praised J.E.H. MacDonald’s *Mist Fantasy* and F.H. Varley’s *Dharana* because they were his kind of pictures. Their concern for the decorative, their essential realism, and their respect for skilled competence were aspects which he could appreciate and praise. But their concentration upon and even limitation to what he considered as repellent, inhospitable, and fearful landscape, dealing “almost exclusively with the less pleasing aspects of our country,” was not his way. While he accepted Tom Thomson as the ultimate expression of Canadian genius, Thomson’s “stark and unfriendly pictures, lacking any hint of the presence or passage of men,” were sometimes repellent. The Group’s pictures had a beauty, founded in rhythm and often colour, yet Phillips could find in them “no warmth, little sentiment and no humour”-only “sobriety, even austerity, and grandeur.” Beside such oversized canvasses the small or quiet or delicate was overwhelmed-like a piccolo in duet with a thunderstorm. “These grim and moody slices” of Canadian landscape compelled attention, but “the earth they portray,” he wrote, “is not mother earth.”⁴⁹ Phillips clung to an older yet no less valid definition of beauty, where “virgin country of forest primeval did not stimulate the imagination so certainly as that in which the hand of man was apparent.” Man’s presence could give “time, association or the satisfying comfort of humanity to an otherwise barren landscape.” The wilderness which the Group of Seven made its primary focus remained to Phillips “unfriendly in pictorial art as well as in fact.”⁵⁰

While his perception of nature and man and of their suitabilities as subject matter differentiated Phillips from the wilderness ethos of the Group of Seven, there was also a stylistic contrast which was symptomatic of a break occurring everywhere

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in the style and function of art. Since Van Gogh, art was becoming increasingly subjective, seeking to express emotion or spiritual attitude. The subjective artist used painting as an outlet for his own internal moods and responses. The picture became something of a transcript of an inner condition while subject matter became of less importance than the painter's expression or feelings about it. Phillips recognized the division that was taking place and he chose his side. He divided his contemporaries into objectivists who dealt with fact, and subjectivists who dealt with fancy. The objectivist like himself, was satisfied that a realistic transcription from nature was a worthy subject in itself; the subjectivist regarded it as only a means to an end. The objectivist adhered to tradition and technique; the subjectivist and his admirers embraced a "cult of clumsiness."⁵¹ The Group of Seven, though it remained largely wedded to realism, was often as concerned with expressing and conveying emotion about its landscapes or in discovering their spiritual essence as in portraying what the landscape actually looked like. Phillips recognized the tendency and, because they were seldom very radical in it, he did not censor it-but it was not his way. He adhered firmly to an older aesthetic tradition which allowed for changes in style and perception, but only within an objectivist tradition which sought beauty through nature. His emotional sensitivity was to the external beauty which could be found by the percipient observer. In this approach he was not within the mainstream of art's critical assessment. As Bertram Brooker put it, "Phillips was out of key with the whole art mood not merely of this country but of this time:" A really creative contribution to art, Brooker insisted, "must come through the awakened spirit and not through the conscious training of eye and hand."⁵² To such elevations of spirit over technique, training, and tradition Phillips could never agree. He rejected and reviled "these pseudo-modern schools of painting" with their "disregard for good technique" and their "contempt for realism."⁵³ He stood against the current of subjective expressionism, and his reputation reflects it. Not even within the avant-garde, much less at its cutting edge, he was swept by critics and scholars into the eddies and backwaters of even Canadian art.

Art criticism and art historical scholarship have had little respect for "laggards." As James Ackerman writes, in modern criticism "the forces that make for change in art have been praised more warmly than those that make for stability."⁵⁴ The artist is admired more for his innovation than for his ability to sustain tradition. That this standard of judgment may itself

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be out of key with deeper intellectual currents of our time, that it may contain suspect assumptions of progress, that it is tinged with a Whig interpretation, has not significantly weakened its pervasiveness. To Wilkin and Fenton, authors of *Modern Painting in Canada*, the standard was artists who “were instrumental, in some way, in establishing modern -or modernist-painting in this country.”⁵⁵ That basis for judgment ensures that Phillips is omitted. Such a criterion, together with Phillips conventional character, his choice of minor media, and his provincial location, determined-even overdetermined-that Phillips would be out of the mainstream.

A love of verbal expression was probably second only to Phillips’ love of art and nature. Of course, he wrote for money. The *Winnipeg Evening Tribune* articles brought him a salary of \$27 a month and *The Technique of the Color Wood-Cut* paid a thousand dollars in royalties. The three unpublished manuscripts that made up “An Artist Holds Forth” were written to “bring in a few shekels.”⁵⁶ But lucre was not the only, even major, motivation. *The Technique of the Color Wood-Cut* made a nice sum, but Phillips produced it because he had been “struck by the fact that there was still no literature” on the subject. 17 As with his unsuccessful attempts to establish a journal on the visual arts in Canada, to produce a film and to teach courses on wood-cuts across the country, a primary incentive for writing was to spread the gospel of Beauty.

Beauty was Phillips’ touchstone. It could be found throughout nature, and he sometimes wrote of art as little more than a way of bringing natural beauty home, of making it domestic and permanent. His nature writing went far beyond the pedestrian or the trite, enabling his readers to share in his own appreciation of the subtler manifestations of nature: rime on trees in winter or the divergent textures of a waterfall in spring. He wrote of his encounters with nature with some of the sophistication of a botanist, zoologist, and geologist, and with all the sensitivity of an aesthete. His mission was to enhance the public’s appreciation of their surroundings, be it the Lake of the Woods, Upper Fort Garry or a solitary grain elevator.

Churning out a weekly column on art was no easy task. There were times when he resorted to irrelevant fill, to long thefts from new or old books, to thin rumination and vapid descriptions. But he usually found a subject that moved him, whether the exposure of the man who admitted that he knew nothing of art but insisted that he knew what he liked or the description of a visit to an exciting new sketching ground. Phillips wrote about everything he encountered relating to art. A visit to Montreal brought him to the studios of Edwin Holgate and

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others, and resulted in an essay, "Artists in Montreal." A talk by Governor General Lord Bessborough prompted Phillips to attack "the parrot-like taunts of the rebels who cry, 'Academic, old-fashioned, Victorian'."⁵⁸ A reading of Jay Hambridge's *Dynamic Symmetry* led Phillips to explore the themes of form and proportion in "The Aesthetic Sense." Visits to exhibitions and artists' studios in Winnipeg and elsewhere brought forth a series of essays and articles on individual artists, groups, and regional art movements. Even artistic disputes—the National Gallery of Canada controversy in 1932 is one example—gave Phillips a subject for his writing.

Phillips possessed a sound knowledge and respect for the history of art when he wrote about these things. He did not hold undue reverence for the Old Masters—he found them over-priced, frequently in poor repair, and incapable of satisfying contemporary standards of aesthetics. Yet he did believe "that the contemporary artist must compete with every artist who has ever lived and whose work has survived."⁵⁹ The modernist who broke with the traditions established in the Renaissance, whose work could not be compared with the artistic accomplishments of the past, never won favor in Phillips' eyes.

Phillips devoted many articles and essays to what he called "the cult of clumsiness." He criticized modern art because it was not a product of long and steady training, because it was insincere. He variously described it as impudent, a mere fad, a joke, a "world-wide hoax" perpetuated by Parisian art dealers.⁶⁰ Above all modernist pictures were not beautiful. "To unfold and display aspects of beauty may not be the immediate aim of every artist," Phillips wrote, "but it is the ultimate aim." The modernists professed to "a cult of sheer ugliness and unreason" while cutting against the grain of art's historical development.⁶¹ He either ignored or lashed out at modernist works. After a visit to Montreal he devoted no critical discussion to the Contemporary Art Society of which Paul-Emile Borduas was a leading member, an "active group of artists who abjure face and conscientious representation."⁶² Phillips was narrow and reactionary in his artistic sensibilities.

In championing the beautiful and traditional in painting Phillips aligned himself with the less progressive Canadian artists, among them Thomas Frupp, Charles John Collings, Arthur Heming, Frederick A. Cross, Carl Runguis, and Eric Bergman.⁶³ A.C. Leighton was another whose work Phillips liked. The Albertari's painting "encompassed English pastorals, village scenes, windmills, hob-nobbing, Canadian prairie and mountain views:" It reflected a positive, attractive personality... at once individual

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and traditional.”⁶⁴ As a watercolourist, a practitioner of the English landscape tradition, a purveyor of diverse subjects, and an apostle of beauty, Leighton was Phillips’ kind of artist.

Another major theme obvious in Phillips’ writing is the duty he owed to western Canadian artists. He hoped that such artists as Winnipeg’s Bridgen and Bergman would “be accorded a place in future histories of art in Canada no less prominent” than that of members of the Group of Seven and the Canadian Group of Painters.⁶⁵ Many of the artists that Phillips singled out for praise had, like him, two strikes against them: they were traditional and they were western. “An artist in the west has more difficulty in achieving recognition ... He misses personal contacts which count for so much and unless his work is sound in construction and original in treatment and theme it is apt to be overlooked.”⁶⁶ In his claims for recognition for traditional and western Canadian artists, Phillips did not overlook the importance of the Group of Seven. He devoted several essays to its individual members, as well as to the Group as a whole. He perceptively noted that their success was due “to the very size, strength and brilliance of their paintings,” and to the belief by some that the group had founded a national school of Canadian painting.⁶⁷ He was a friend of the Group but had to agree that the painters were not entirely as original as proclaimed. He protested particularly at the pushing of any one style or subject to dominance and at the conscious nationalism that lay behind this. He preferred to recognize several styles in Canadian painting. “For reasons that are mainly geographical,” Canadian art lacked “unity and thrives in widely separate centres.”⁶⁸ In his writings, Phillips dealt with some of the major problems and issues of Canadian art and western Canadian art between the wars. He had his own weaknesses and foibles: little tolerance for the modernists; the ossification of standards based upon his own school of thought; an almost complete failure to understand the ideas and motivation of the avant-garde of his age. Yet Phillips still offers to his readers a sensitivity to beauty and to art. He gives what is to some a new and fresh, to others a rekindled, perspective of Canadian and western art of the period. His is a view of culture in the twenties and thirties from the prairies and from “the other side.”⁶⁹

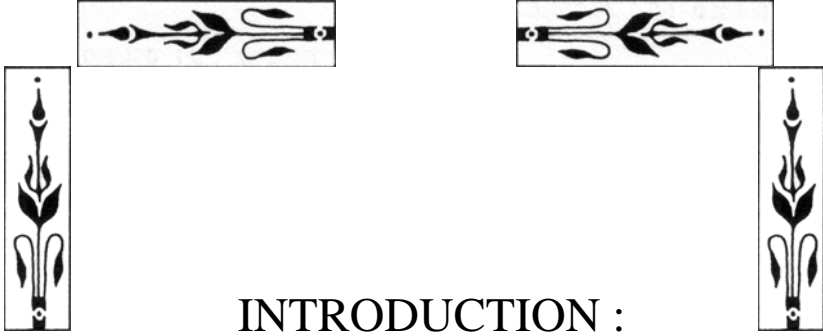
The material in this volume was selected from a large body of published and unpublished writings of Walter J. Phillips. Many of his pieces were published in scattered journals, some of them rare or ephemeral, including *The Beaver*, *The Canadian Forum*, *Saturday Night*, *The Original Colour Print Magazine*,

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and his own portfolios of prints. Most of his newspaper writings, especially his "Art and Artists" column for the *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, were collected by him at the time and pasted into a series of scrapbooks. A large corpus of typescripts was left unpublished at his death. The clipping books and unpublished typescripts became the property of John P. Crabb of Winnipeg, a generous, historically-conscious collector, who kindly gave us access to them and permission to publish from them. The Phillips family allowed us use of the material in a similarly generous manner. A good deal of the material is difficult to date. Though we know that the typescripts were largely produced before 1932, it is impossible to date them more precisely. We have dated the newspaper clippings whenever possible.

Phillips wrote frequently on the same subject-both in his published and unpublished works. To avoid repetition and to give each topic a coherent and complete form, we have compiled selections from various written sources into five thematic sections: "Pictures on the Wall," "Sketching Canada," "Canadian Art," "Western Canadian Art," and "Art of the Wood-cut." We have maintained throughout the original spelling, but have silently corrected typographical errors, punctuation, obvious misspellings, and nonsensical sentences. In some instances we have silently substituted a noun for a pronoun, amplified an abbreviation, inserted a forename before a surname, and made similar minor changes to the text. In such cases we judged that allowing an unencumbered sense to remain with the passage was more important than a textual integrity built upon square brackets. In no case, of course, has any meaning been changed in the slightest; where there is doubt, an annotation has been given.

Acknowledgement for their indispensable assistance is due John P Crabb and Mary Phillips Adamson and, through her, the other members of the Phillips family. Rachel Bendall gave painstaking attention to the preparation of the manuscript for publication; the National Gallery of Canada and the Winnipeg Art Gallery assisted with the illustrations.



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1. F A. Young, "Rev. John Phillips," *The Primitive Methodist*, (May, 1914), 83-84.
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3. Duncan Campbell Scott, *Walter J. Phillips* (Toronto: 1947), p. 4.
4. H. B. Kendall, *The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church* (2 vols.; London, n.d.), II, p. 27.
5. City of Birmingham Polytechnic, Student Register, Birmingham Municipal School of Art, Central School, Walter Joseph Phillips, Registration No. 8995, 1898-99, 1899-1900, 1900-01.
6. Testimonial of Bourne College Headmaster, 8 May 1902, John Crabb Collection, Winnipeg (hereafter JCC).
7. Marjorie Dallas, taped interview with Phillips, November 1961, Glenbow-Alberta Institute.
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9. Dallas, interview.
10. Scott, *Phillips*, p. 12.
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12. Dallas, interview.
13. Phillips, "Pictures on the Wall," JCC, unpublished typescript, p. 6; Phillips to Scott, 25 July 1945, D. C. Scott Papers, Public Archives of Canada, MG 30 D 160.
14. Scott, Phillips, p. 26.
15. Phillips, "Wet Paint, JCC, unpublished typescript, p. 87.
16. Phillips, *The Technique of the Color Wood-Cut* (New York, 1926), p. 13.
17. Phillips, "Wood-Cut," JCC, unpublished typescript, p. 6.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Malcolm C. Salaman, "Wood-Engraving for Colour in Great Britain," *Studio* LVIII, No. 242 (May 1913). 283-99; Allen W. Seaby, "Colour-Printing from Wood Blocks," *Studio* LXXVII, No. 318 (Sept. 1919), 149-58.
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21. Undated proposal from Phillips to H. O. McCurry for a film on wood-cuts, National Galley of Canada (hereafter NGC).
22. Tokuno, "Japanese Wood-Cutting and Wood-Cut Printing," U. S. National Museum, *Annual Report*, 1892 (Washington, 1893), pp. 221-24; Edward F. Strange, *Japanese Colour-prints* "Victoria and Albert Museum Handbooks" (London, 1910, 1913).
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25. Phillips to Brown, 1 November 1928, NGC.
26. Phillips to McCurry, 8 June 1929, NGC.
27. Phillips to Trevor Robinson, 6 February 1935, JCC.

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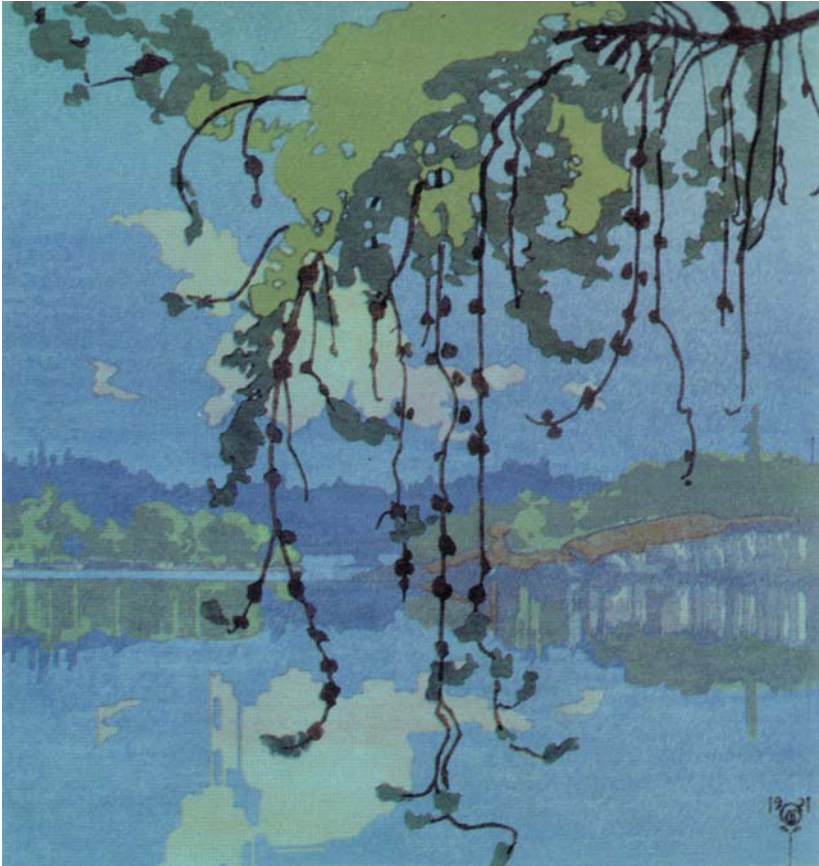
28. *Ibid.*; Phillips to McCurry, is March 1933, NGC.
29. Phillips to McCurry, is March 1933, NGC.
30. Phillips to McCurry, 7 July 1935, NGC.
31. Phillips to Robinson, 6 February 1935, JCC; Phillips to McCurry, 7 July 1935, NGC.
32. Phillips to McCurry, 8 May 1941, NGC.
33. Phillips to McCurry, 29 November 1944, NGC.
34. Phillips to Robinson, 25 January 1941, JCC.
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38. "Wet Paint," p. 45, JCC.
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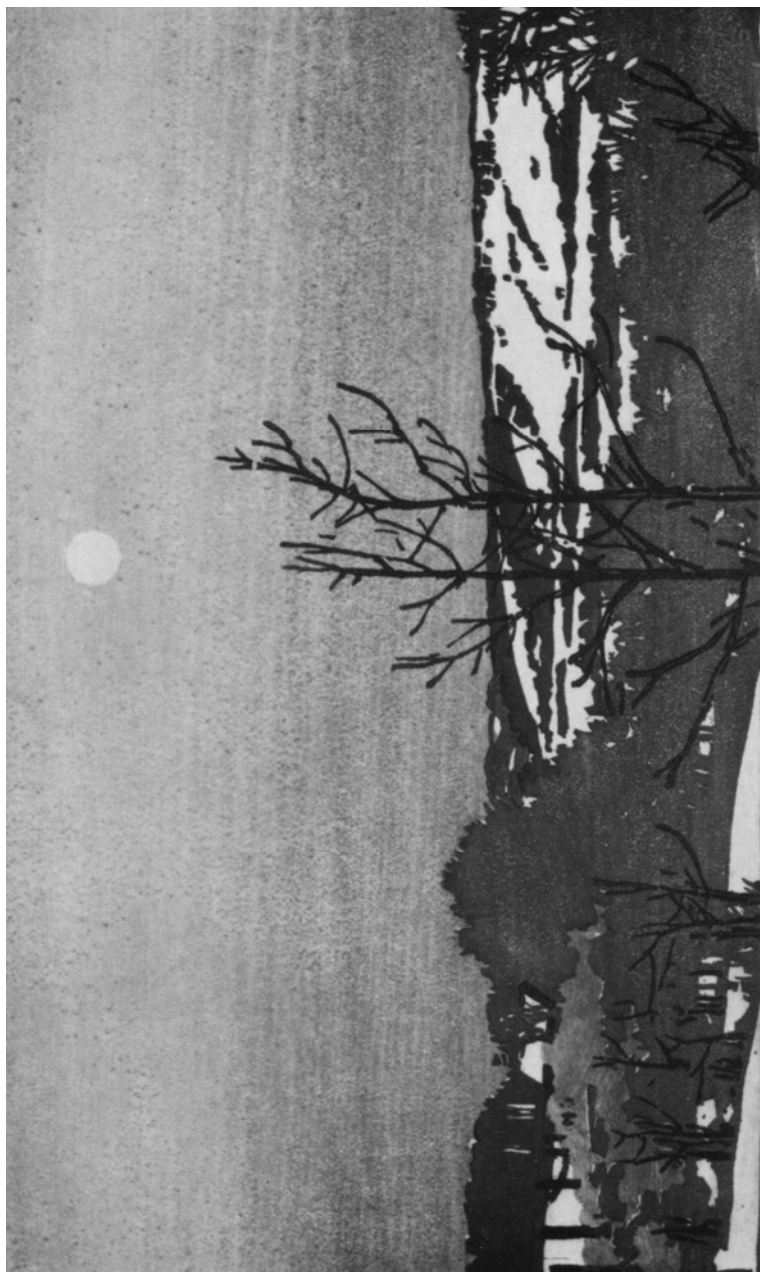
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44. "An Apology for Dress," "'Art and Artists,'" *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated, Clipping books, JCC.
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47. Arthur Lismer, "Canadian Art," *The Canadian Theosophist*, V (15 February 1925) 177-79; Lismer, quoted in John A.B. McLeish, *September Gale* (Toronto, 1955), p. 186.
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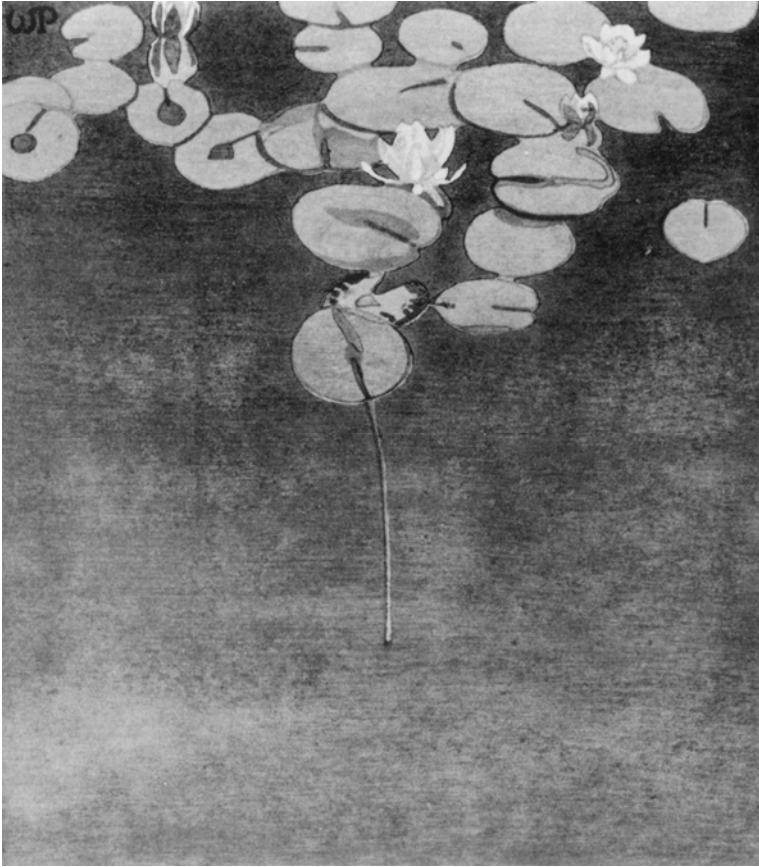
57. Dallas, interview.
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60. "Impudent Bids for Notoriety," *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 20 April 1940, Clipping books, JCC.
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62. "Artists in Montreal," *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated (1930?), Clipping books, JCC.
63. "Modernistic vs. Academic: The Eternal Controversy" *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 20 March 1937, Clipping books, JCC.
64. "This Man Leighton," unidentified, undated, Clipping books, JCC.
65. "Art and Artists," *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated, Clipping books, JCC.
66. "Eric Bergman: Revolt Against the 'Modern'," *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 2 January 1937, Clipping books, JCC.
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69. A portion of this Introduction was given as the James A. Jackson Memorial Lecture to the History Club of Winnipeg on 12 March 1980.



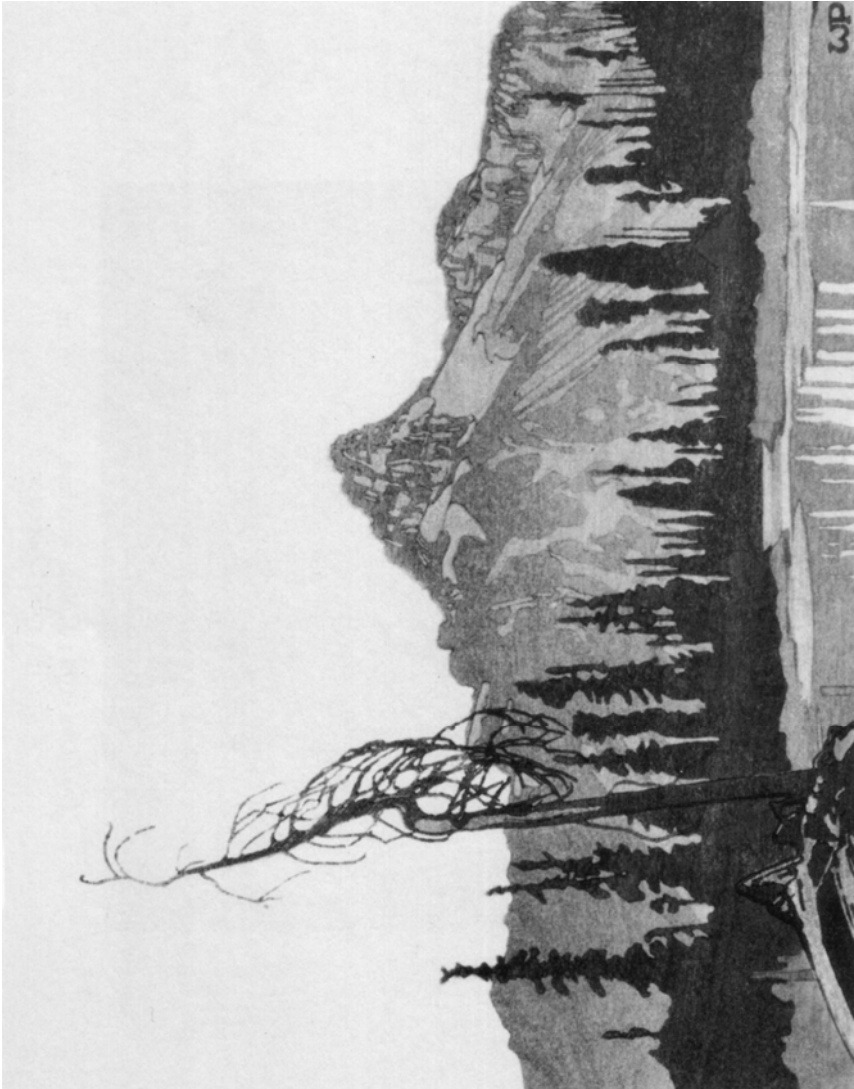
Evening, 1921, Colour woodcut, 18.4 x 16 cm,
The National Gallery of Canada.



Winter, 1917, Colour woodcut, 14.4 x 24.1 cm,
The National Gallery of Canada.



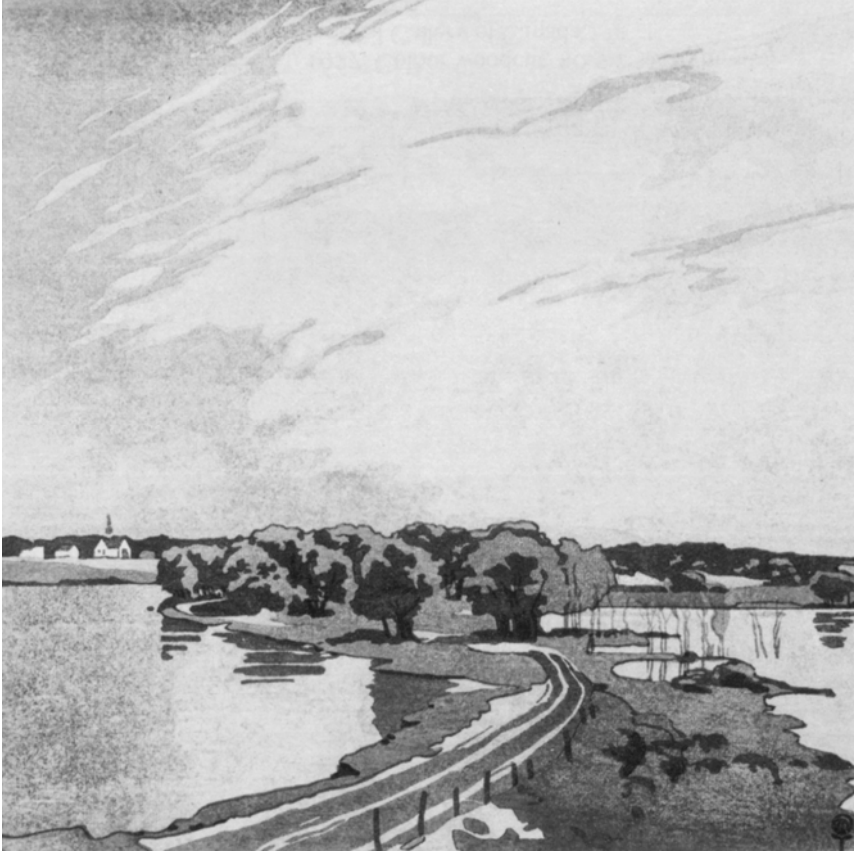
Pond Lilies, 1924, Colour woodcut, 18.4 x 16 cm,
Crabb Collection.



*Mount Cathedral from Lake O'Hara, 1927, Colour woodcut, 17.7 x 22.5 cm,
Crabb Collection.*



Mamalilicoola, B.C., 1927, Colour woodcut, 30.5 x 35.3 cm,
The National Gallery of Canada.



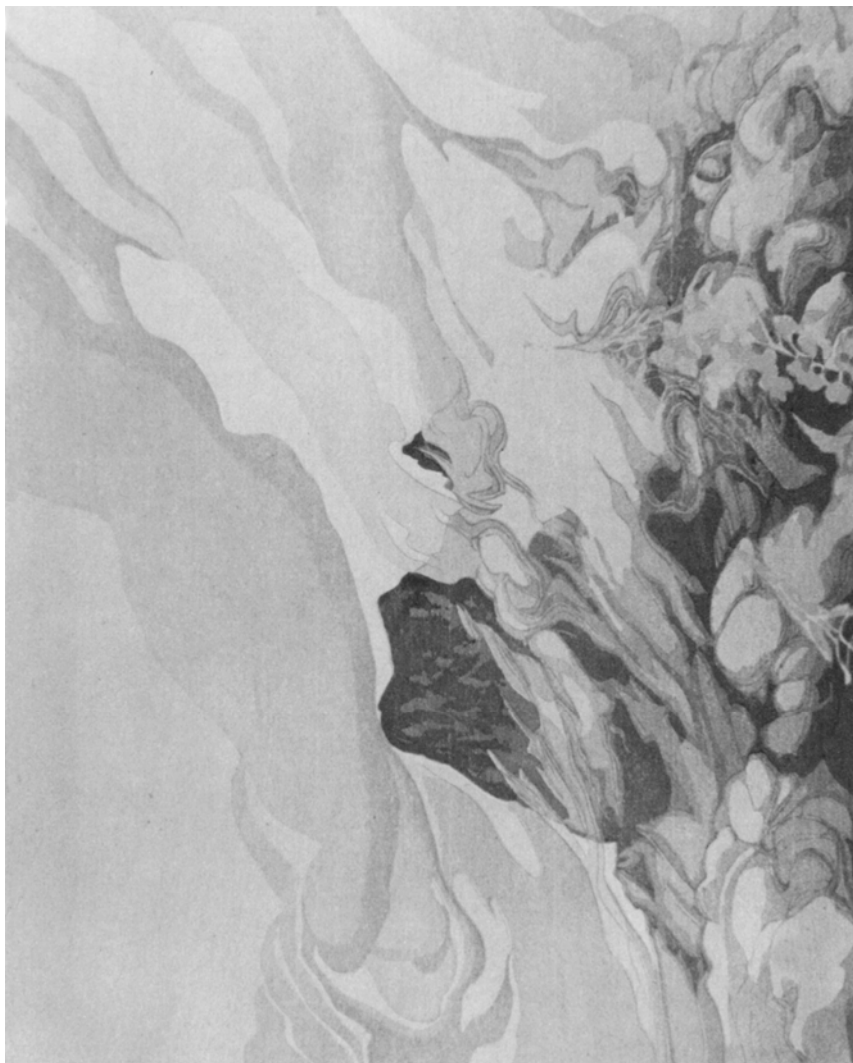
Red River Road, 1923, Colour woodcut, 20 x 20.2 cm,
Crabb Collection.



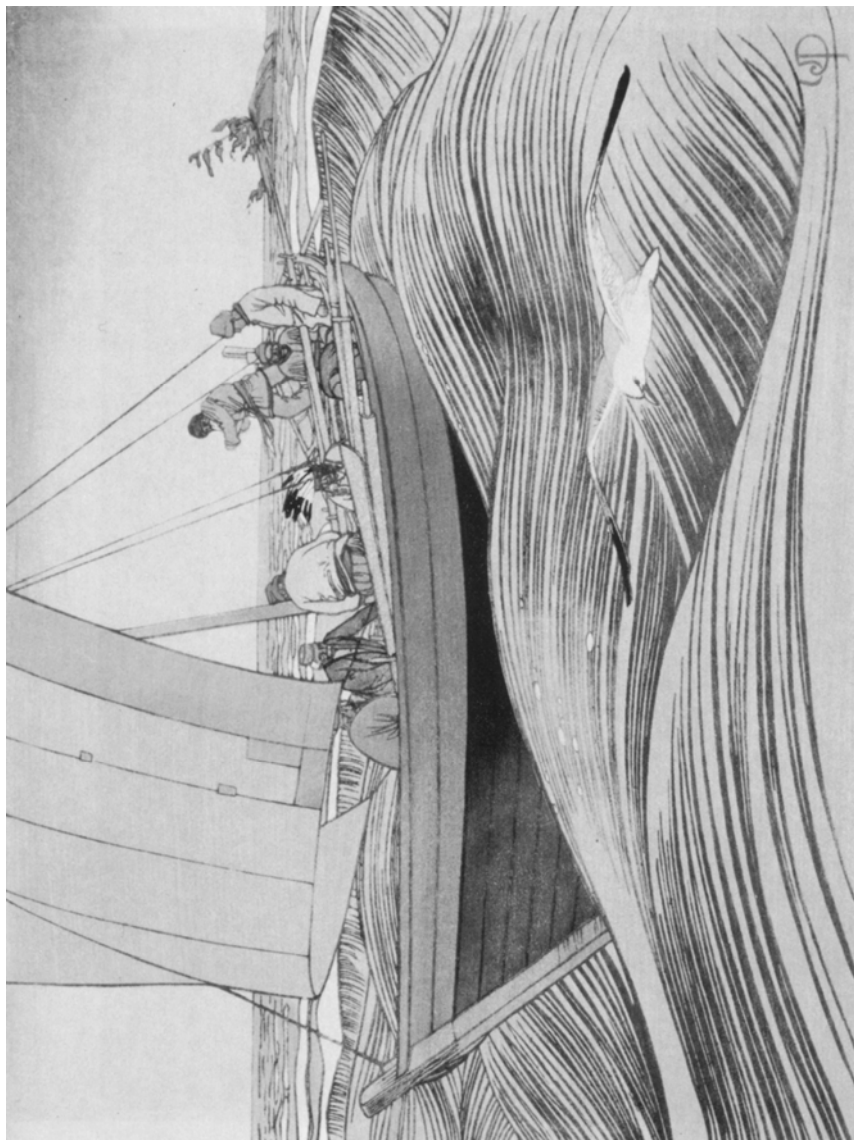
Johnson's Creek, near Banff, 1947, Watercolour and graphite, 50 x 63.1 cm,
The National Gallery of Canada.



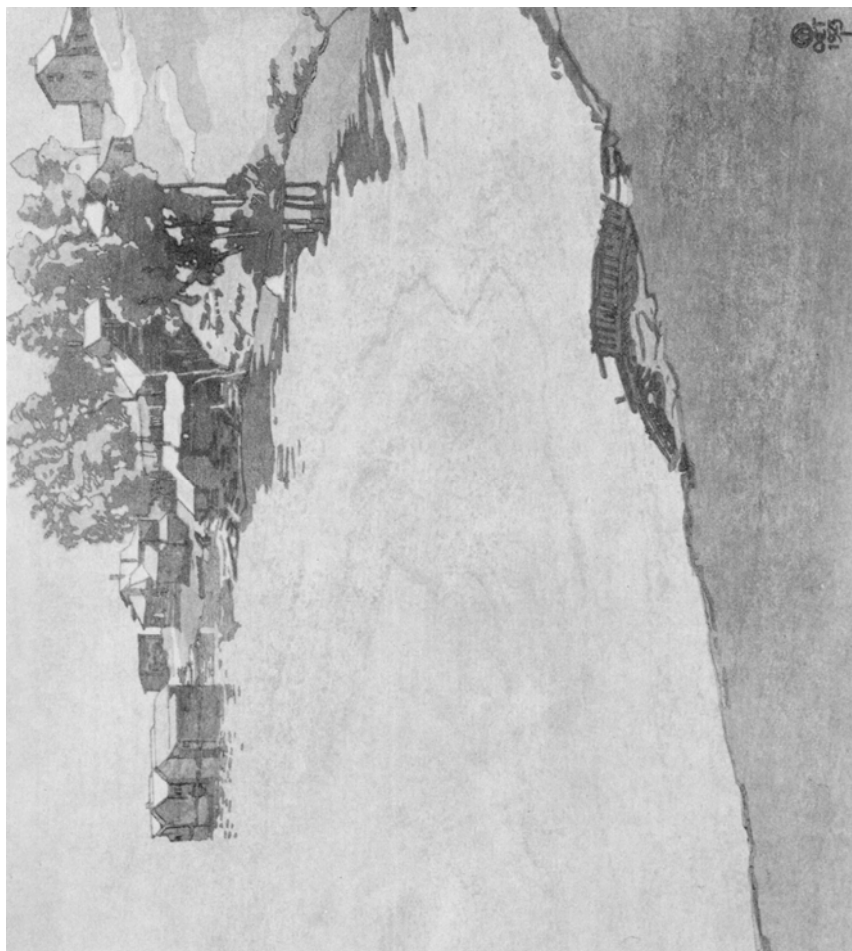
Water-Baby, 1920, Watercolour, 42.9 x 53.4 cm,
The National Gallery of Canada.



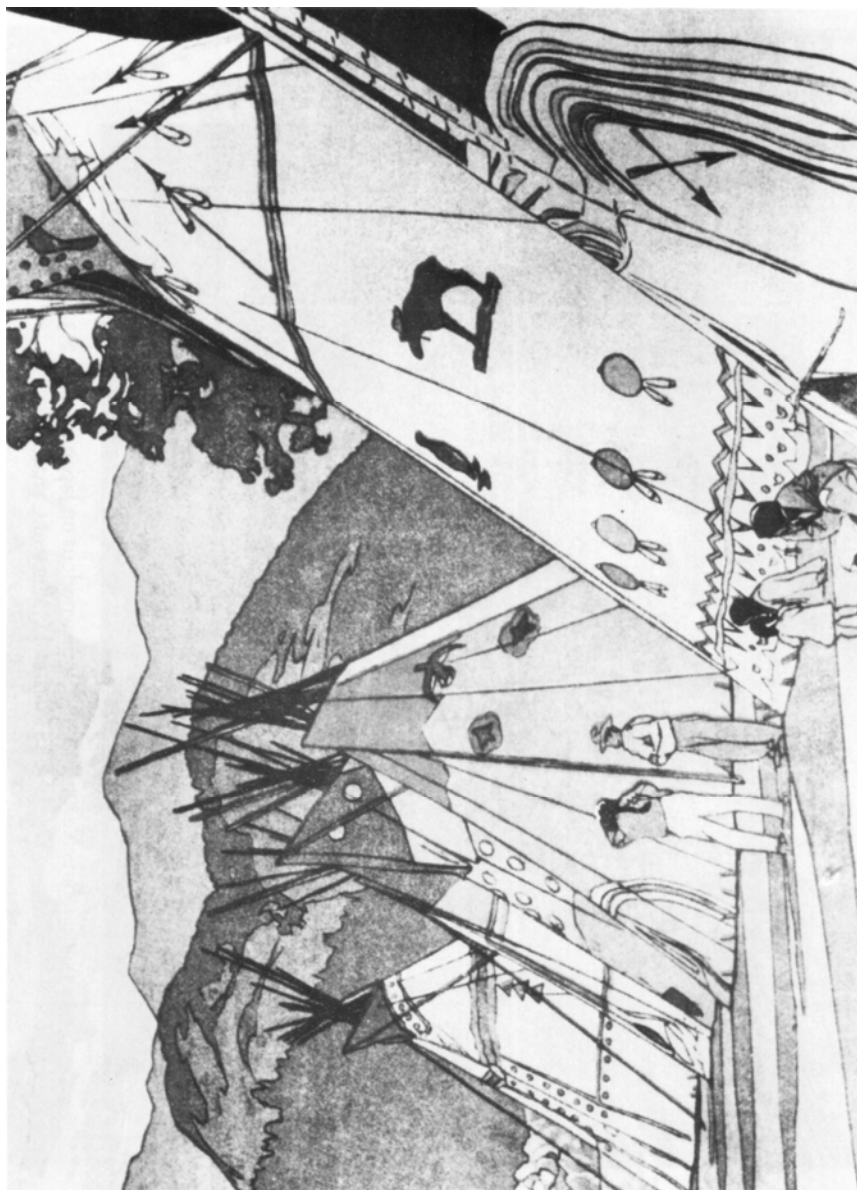
Vapours Round the Mountain Curl'd, 1938, Colour woodcut, 22.5 x 27.8 cm,
Edition 100, Private Collection.



York Boat on Lake Winnipeg, 1930, Colour woodcut on Japan paper, 26.1 x 35 cm,
The National Gallery of Canada.



Normal Bay, No. 2, 1923, Colour woodcut on Japan paper, 22.3 x 25 cm,
The National Gallery of Canada.



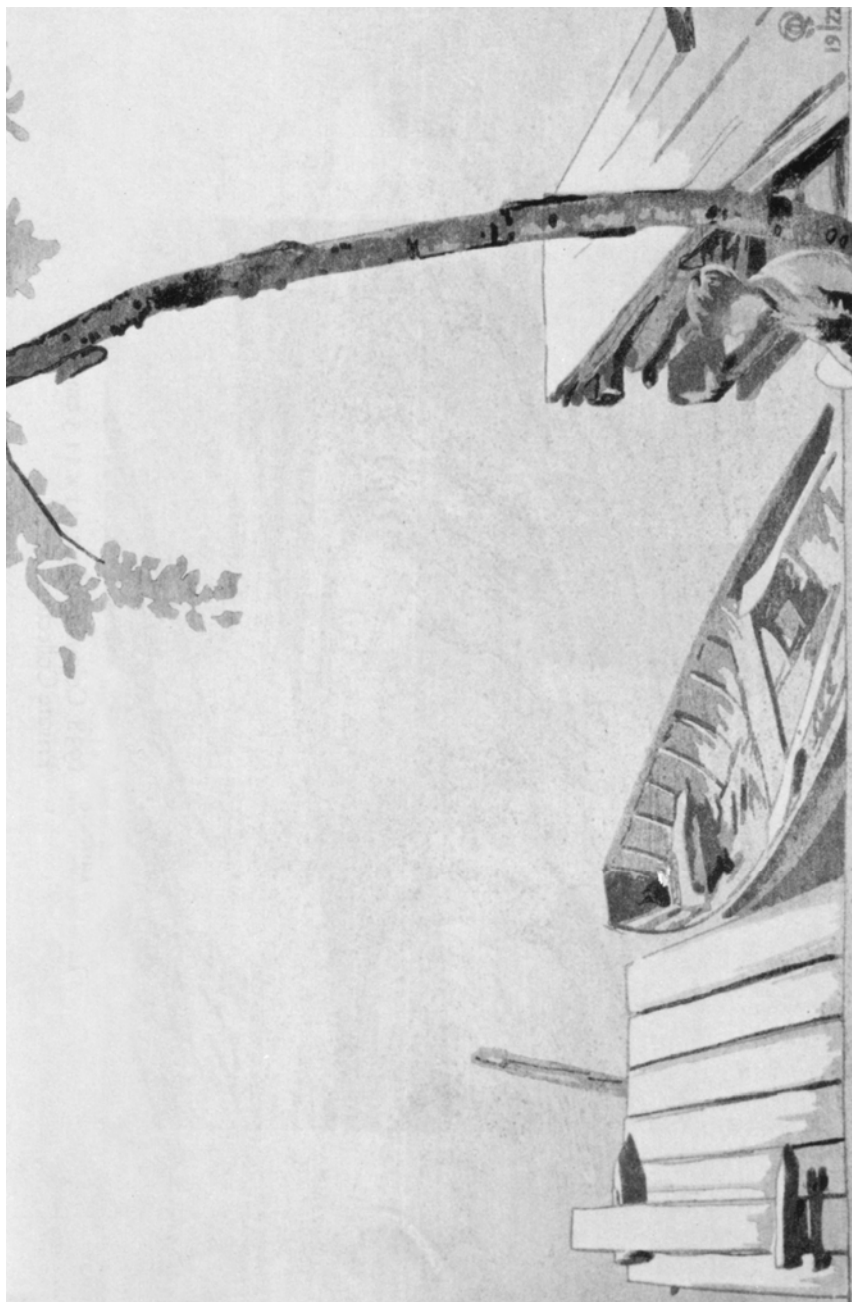
*Indian Days, Banff, 1950, Colour woodcut,
Private Collection.*



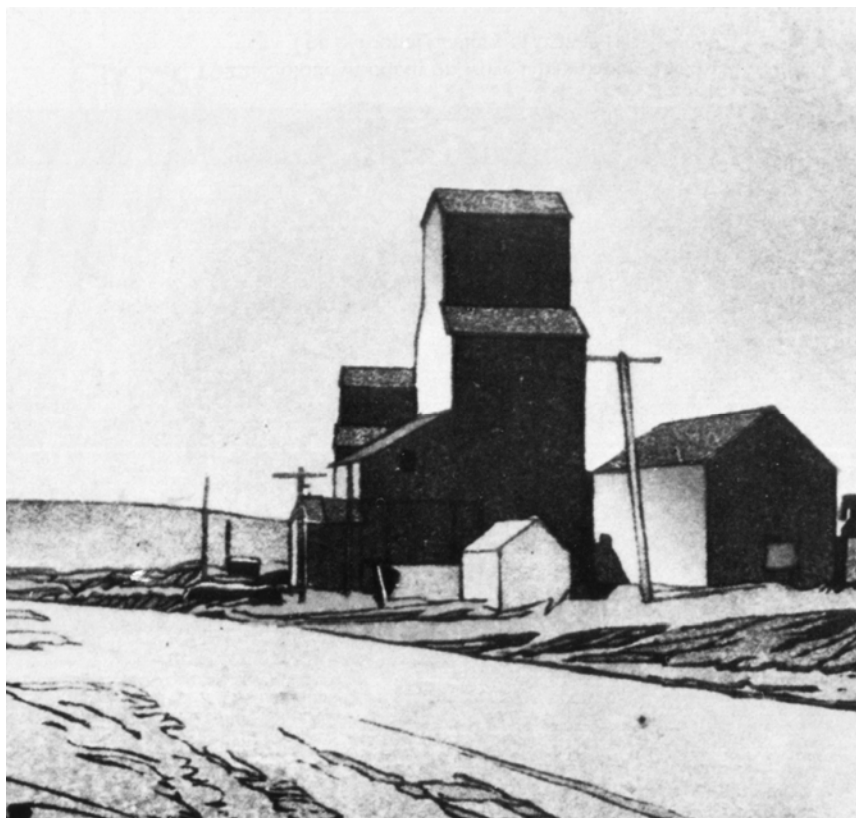
*Howe Sound, British Columbia, 1935, Colour woodcut, 26.2 x 31.5 cm,
Private Collection.*



The Jackpine, Colour Woodcut, 22.1 x 25.3 cm,
The National Gallery of Canada.



The Dock, 1922, Colour woodcut on wove Japan paper, 18.2 x 27.6 cm,
The National Gallery of Canada.



*Lariviere, Manitoba, 1938, Colour woodcut, 11 x 11.5 cm,
Private Collection.*

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PICTURES ON THE WALL

[“Pictures on the Wall,” typescript, Crabb Collection 1 - 2 .
Also published in the *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 13 May 1939.]

WE HAVE WITH US the discouraged decorator who insists on bare walls or at any rate walls bare of pictures. As far back as I can remember he has sprung his theories at intervals upon an unresponsive public. Like an obstinate but unsuccessful pugilist, he sticks out his chin, absorbs his punishment, and subsides, only to pop up again to repeat the proceeding. Fortunately for the artist few people have much faith in the idea; they realize that to deprive themselves of the solace and inspiration of pictures would be to indulge in a pointless penance.

Walls without pictures do tend to imprison the mind; they crowd in upon one and crush the spirit. Consideration of this principle causes the artist to avoid shut-in landscapes which provide no escape for the eye. The wall is the symbol of imprisonment, constraint, obstruction and blindness. It has no happy significance and no pleasing attribute save that of potential sanctuary which involves concealment and confinement. Put a window in the wall, however, and you have a way out; you no longer feel handcuffed and hobbled, you are in contact with the world of colour and movement; your outlook is enlarged and your spirit refreshed.

Pictures also are windows open to life and nature. As I write I can look out on the cold waters of the Arctic; I can see the length of a Cairo street bathed in sunlight; or a busy, if murky, reach of the Clyde with its docks, and freighters loading. By turning my head a bit I can take advantage of the little windows that open upon other scenes and other seasons—the Forest in winter; a sunny vista on Lake of the Woods; La Have Island in Nova Scotia; and that precipitous and sombre rock known as Bon Echo. If I take a chair by the fireplace I can stand in spirit on the Sussex Downs, beneath the sails of a towering windmill, and gaze over miles of open country. Or I may dream on a green hillside in Ontario in the evening within a cove of birch trees.

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Originally each of these scenes was chosen for its beauty by an artist, a friend of mine. When I acquired them I selected each one from among a number of others. They were hand-picked; they ought to be beautiful, and they are. But if, and when, I tire of one of them, I take it down and hang up another in its place. In that respect these little windows have an advantage over those that merely let in daylight and do not necessarily reveal anything so attractive. Some of us fail to appreciate this and retain our pictures until they have become over-familiar. We languish, for example, in the stifling heat of harvest, when we long for a breath of sea-air; we unwillingly contemplate cows in a meadow when we crave a sight of the mountains.

Here are two portraits also. One is the head of a Cree Indian painted against a flat background. It is like another presence in the room, and does not take one out of it. The other is a sketch of myself seated at the piano in an English country-house. It has depth and gives one the sensation of looking beyond the wall on which it hangs into another room. I like that. I like the idea of a picture being a window.

This conception of the function of painting is shared by artists of nearly every school. So long as the picture gives an illusion of depth and space, it enlarges a room. The world which it reveals may be a strange one like the dream-world of surrealism, or it may be the world in which we live and move, whether its aspect is homely or exotic. Whatever it may reveal, its frame to me must be an open casement.

There is the matter of sentiment also. Like Petrarch of old I am not ashamed to say that I love my pictures, not only for their merit as works of art, but because each was painted by a friend. He is a poor creature who boasts that he has no time for sentiment. A love of pictures is perfectly natural and deep-seated. Even Pre-historic man decorated his cave with pictures. I suppose the fad of doing without them is a phase of snobbery, a desire to be different, but it is a grand example of the time-honoured sport of cutting off one's nose to spite one's face.

HOW TO LOOK AT NATURE

[“Pictures on the Wall,” typescript, Crabb Collection, 48-50.]

I am asked sometimes how to look at Nature; because I am a land-scape painter it is thought that I must have a sure-fire answer. I am not sure. I may have a keener perception of my own brand of beauty since it is my business to smell it out and reproduce it, but do I get more pleasure out of the simple contemplation of nature? I don't doubt that I do. Some of us are almost pagan in that our love for Nature prevails over our love for art.

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The artist is supposed to look on landscape with a predatory eye, mindful of what may be appropriated therefrom. As the undertaker measures the corpse for its box, so the painter measures scenery... visualizing its ultimate apotheosis within a frame of gilt.

It is no use raw; it must be modulated by art. The picture has but one frame, lacking depth or distance; it is contained within the static walls of a rectangle, an oval or a circle instead of being limitless; it is entirely devoid of movement - a timeless heath without wind; it is but a part of a panorama, a line of poetry torn from its context; it has one texture instead of many; and its luminosity is a muted parody on the effulgence of the light of day, or the unsubstantial shimmer of starlight. The painter's job is to compose these differences, by selection, arrangement, unification, and other devices.

How much of Nature and how much of Art should go into a painting is the point of departure for all new schools of painting. Constable's claim, that, whenever he sat down to make a sketch from nature, the first thing he tried to do was to forget that he had ever seen a picture, must not be taken literally. It does not mean that he tried to forget all that he knew of the science of picture-making. Far from it. He meant merely that he did not want to see nature through another man's eyes. He wanted his transcriptions to be his own, unimpaired by extraneous influences.

De Louthenburg painted a panorama-he called it the Eidophusicon - which he exhibited in Panton Square in London. He made it as realistic as possible by using lighting and sound effects. It was very popular. Gainsborough went to see it every evening. De Louthenburg wanted to show a free expanse of landscape and evade the construction of the frame. Pictures have been painted on concave surfaces with the same idea.

Many generations have attempted to suggest movement, without much success. The representation of textures has frequently been aided by the incorporation of material other than pigment in the picture-strands of hair, bits of tinsel, newspaper and so forth. The problem of reproducing light proved a fascinating one. The Tenebristi tackled it; the Impressionists approached it from another angle; and the Pointillists reduced the problem to one of simple division.

The art of painting was always considered to be that of representation. All down the ages the painter strove to render an illusion of reality. Many stories have come down to us of alleged success, of realism so faithfully achieved as to deceive beholders. They began with the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea, which was a winner. No other work of art has ever come to life.

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Apelles painted grapes so real that, it is said, birds came to peck at them; a horse neighed at a painted horse in another picture by the same artist; and his third success was a painted curtain which a friend tried to pull back.

Vasari quotes many examples of the same kind of thing. Peacocks, he wrote, pecked so heartily at some strawberries painted in fresco on an outside wall that the plaster was destroyed. Moronobu, a Japanese artist, painted sparrows so well that one spectator swore that he saw them fly away and return to the kakemono. There was the fly on the snuff box that a king tried to brush off, and failed because it was painted.

But these were all near objects, not overly difficult to paint. I never heard tell of a landscape that fooled anyone. Constable used to say that he had never seen anything in art that completely satisfied him; and it is safe to assume that he was never deceived. The most a landscape painter can do is to reanimate the emotions inspired by scenery....

It must be apparent that the artist's way of looking at scenery differs from that of the layman; it is complicated by other considerations than those of simple enjoyment. There is no doubt that he sees more in it than others do, but he has more practice and whether he derives more pleasure than they from its contemplation is doubtful.

My friend the dealer in Winnipeg had a nice gallery above his store. I walked in there once and was surprised to see three ladies in curious and unnatural attitudes. One stood with her head between her knees- it was in the days of the knee-length skirt; the others were painfully bent, and their heads were twisted as though they were trying to get an inverted view of something or other. I withdrew hurriedly. The dealer followed.

"What on earth...?" I asked.

He smiled.

"Only three women from Detroit," he explained "buying a picture for their art club. Thought I'd sold them one, but one of them just remembered that Professor Ecks said that if a picture was good it was just as interesting upside down. They're looking at it upside down."

"Why didn't you turn the picture round for them?" I asked.

"Oh well!" he laughed.

Seurat and Signac never saw in nature masses of colour split up into primaries-blue sky, for example, made up of touches of pure blue, pink, and yellow-but they painted them that way, and calculated that this method of colour-division would give the effect of reality, impossible to achieve by other means, and that at a certain distance there would result a visual fusion of the pure colours and an added sense of vibration.

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The botanist, the geologist, the hunter, and the nature student are trained observers also, but their ways differ again from ours. Theirs is primarily a material rather than a spiritual interest. The layman, I expect would not wish so much to look through their eyes. He wants a guide to nature's beauty, and grandeur. There is nothing else for it-he must learn how to paint.

PRINT-MAKING AS A PASTIME

[“Pictures on the Wall,” typescript, Crabb Collection, 5-7]

Much has been written about painting as a hobby as a pastime, or as a means of escape from boredom; in fact the woods are full of amateurs. High and low, recruited from every walk of life, their name is legion. A few months ago I was sketching in the grounds of the Mission of San Jose in San Antonio. The air was warm and still; I sat in comfort on the lawn; peacocks strutted nearby; the mood was peaceful in the extreme. A lady came scurrying across the grass towards me. She stopped short. “Oh, excuse me-I thought you were our President,” she said.

I recall another interruption, perhaps irrelevant here but a case of mistaken identity too. I was sketching deep in the mountains. A game-warden happened by, stopped to examine my sketch, shook his head disparagingly. “No,” he said, “There's only one man can paint these mountains. That s Phillips.” Even though I couldn't please the warden I enjoyed the occupation and incidentally that is how I make my living. Like Con-stable I can truthfully say, “Mine is, indeed, a beautiful profession....”

During my early career as a print-maker we lived in Winnipeg. It was a young city in those days, sometimes called The Gateway to the West-a likeable place full of good company. There was some interest in pictures, there were men who could afford to and did buy pictures and exhibitions of art were held at irregular intervals if a suitable hall was available. The city even boasted a framer and dealer Richardson Brothers (two brothers, one the framer, the other the dealer), who were hosts to peripatetic picture-dealers from London.' My first sales of prints were made literally through Richardsons. They framed a few of my etchings and put them in the window for the populace to see. The people did not react, at least in the way we hoped; however one day a lady was having some difficulty with her new car and finally backed right into the Richardson window in which my prints were displayed. These became a sorry mess once the plate glass crashed and shattered. The lady's husband made no

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bones about it and paid for all the damage. Thus fortuitously I acquired my first patron.

There is an excitement about print-making that painting lacks. A painting grows under the artist's eyes, growing worse all the time, probably that is, diverging more and more from his original conception of the idea. He grows more dissatisfied as he progresses. He overworks the canvas and destroys its freshness, and, finally disgusted he puts his foot through it.

In chromoxylography² the artist works almost blind, engraving each colour separately on different blocks of wood and in reverse. They appear to have little relation one to the other until the last one is cut and all are brought together printed on a single sheet. You call upon your reserves of patience and faith and by-and-by with interest mounting instead of lagging, you feel the excitement of true creation and your last efforts become breathless. Until the first print is pulled you are in doubt as to whether you have worked well or ill. The first proof shows you. It is in fact the climax following often weeks of labour. You are mad or glad.

It is related of an English engraver, William Woollett, who had a studio in Rathbone Place in London, that upon the completion of every engraving he made a habit of climbing to his roof and firing a cannon to mark the occasion or more likely to give vent to his feelings. I like the story. That was such a splendid way to let off steam. In short I think an artist gets a bigger "kick" out of pulling a trial proof than of putting the last glazes on a painting.

As far back as I can remember, or nearly, I always wanted to be an artist. We had no fine pictures in our home to inspire me, nor were there any in the few houses we visited. My father was a Methodist minister and had no other income other than his salary. But my mother had a love for art and always encouraged me. She told me of the pictures in her father's house, which, she contended, included a Raphael (this must have been a copy). My first introduction to pictorial art was inevitably through the book-illustrations of Gustave Dore and Noel Paton. This may account for my interest in prints and my long predilection for smaller works.

My collection of prints could never be so absorbing and pleasurable had I not used the same techniques myself. I am thrilled by skilful handling, for it is easy to recognize and I have tried the same hurdles too. I find confidence and knowledge in an expressive line; I admire a good scheme of colour and rejoice in sincerity. The holiday painter gets more from his dabbling than a mere mental nepenthes; he enters a new world and learns to love good pictures intelligently. So with prints....

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ON APPRECIATION

["Wet Paint," typescript, Crabb Collection, 135-138;
the *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 4 February 1928.]

An almost universal lack in art appreciation, and in aesthetics, forces the artist to bow to the common and confident statement, "I don't know anything about pictures, but I know what I like." I like to hear a sincere if unsophisticated expression of opinion on my own work, but to many unfortunate people the mere sight of an original painting excites a critical attitude of mind, and, more often than not, a tactless expression of dislike based upon a profound ignorance of art. "Such persons," wrote Constable, "stroll about the foot of Parnassus, only to pull down by the legs those who are laboriously climbing its sides." It is not altogether a matter of egoism or conceit because such pseudo-critics prefer to direct their remarks to the artist-Heaven forgive them-but one due rather to a common impression that such an attitude is the correct one, that all paintings should be figuratively mutilated, and that all artists are fair game, or really grateful perhaps for a few tips. Professional terminology, or what they regard as such, is not difficult to acquire. There are always catch-phrases. At the moment rhythm is being run to death. A few years ago the fad was to hunt for S's in painting and their absence denoted a shocking state of affairs. I have been assured that a road in pictorial art must always turn to the left. It is all very nonsensical. Rhythm is as necessary in a picture as pigment; it is as much a part of painting as of music. It would have been interesting to have taken the searcher for S's to an exhibition of Cubist art. I do not know where else he or she could possibly avoid finding them.

But the sublime impertinence, from an artist's standpoint, is the practice-may it never increase in popularity-of holding up one hand before a work of art for the purpose of eliminating offending portions. Direct implication of incompetence! He may as well say outright, "You can't draw, you know. All the years you have been practising have been wasted. Why don't you take up something else?" The artist might as justly say to him, "I like your nose, but your abdomen is a trifle protuberant." Thus life might become a trifle more interesting, though the canons of good behaviour might be traversed.

I set out by describing these critical pests as unfortunate. Those who can see something admirable in even a child's attempts to record some aspect of beauty, get more joy out of life. The worst daubs of a backward student, provided they are sincere, contain elements of sublimity, if only the mere evidence of effort, which is itself admirable. It would be a pleasure

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to let our pestilent critic loose where insincere art is concerned. So contrary, however, is human nature, that this is exactly what pleases him.

Let it not be assumed that the artist is so smug as to dislike true criticism. No sincere artist was ever completely satisfied with his labour. He is usually his own best critic, but continuous and prolonged work on one's painting will sometimes dull his judgment. A mistake in drawing becomes difficult to detect when the eye is familiar with it. The critic is in demand, but he must be competent....

Universal appreciation of art, I suppose, cannot be inculcated by any forceful means, by any amount of propaganda, or plethoric pleading. It belongs to those countries and those ages which are not, or were not, ruled by materialism. Though travel was never so easy, literature on art never so profuse, and works of art never so widely distributed, a real passion for pictures is encountered but rarely. Sir George Beaumont used to carry favorite paintings with him on his journeys. Dr. Munro carried them in his coach. Nobody carries them now....

In a western Canadian city a very fine painting by Rembrandt was exhibited with a good deal of pomp and much circumstance. Thousands of people went to see it, who had never before seen a painting by that supreme master. It is safe to say it was an occasion to remember for many of them. An attendant stood at the door of the room in which it was shown. One afternoon a dear old lady stood in front of him and held out her hand.

"Very good, Mr. Rembrandt," she said, "very good indeed, I do hope that you will be able to sell it...."

Is there any possibility of explaining to the uninitiated, the vast difference between good and bad painting? Many volumes have been written on "How to Appreciate Pictures," but they are all abortive as attempts at elucidation, interesting as they may be in other respects. The question occurred to me recently in a picture gallery, while I watched a number of nicely dressed and apparently educated people admire and actually purchase daubs of the utmost worthlessness. It was fascinating. No amateur of art, be his taste academic, modern, or futuristic, could commend this trash. Yet here were acquiescent, even anxious, buyers. It would be an act of grace to enlighten them, but I have to confess that the means, short of a course in painting, seems obscure. I overheard the artist-for he was an artist, in salesmanship-confide to a customer, a lady, "Y'know, artists are like cats; they like to be petted." Since both seemed old enough to know better, this must be regarded rather as a statement of fact than an amatory proflusion, but it is interesting to know what such a man thinks of the profession.

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SECOND-HAND PICTURES

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated.]

In the days of two dollar wheat a western farmer walked into an art store and demanded to be shown the most expensive picture in stock. By some fortunate chance a small Turner water-colour was available. Its price was \$10,000. It was a charming creation and seemed to satisfy the farmer. The dealer scented a sale and kept up an encouraging patter, enlarging upon the genius of the painter and the merit of the painting. "This gem" he said impressively, "came from the collection of Lord Soando." The farmer looked up suspiciously. "Eh?" he said. "Second hand, is it?" He grew indignant as all the implications of the thought slowly filtered through his mind. "I want nothing second-hand," he said, and stalked out of the store.

That is a true story and as a shining example of bucolic ignorance has been good for many a laugh. I laughed myself, but now I realize that my mirth was misbegotten and unseemly. That farmer was a thinker, and one who did not hesitate to potentialize his theories in economics. He seen his duty and he done it. Why indeed should he cumber himself with a picture which reflected the thought and the taste of a bygone age, when he needed the stimulation of contemporary ideas! He was too honest to submit to the dogmatism of the snob in art who affects to see ultimate perfection in all the works of all old masters.

A word on the unreasonable attitude of this snob, this highbrow. He mistakes historical significance for artistic merit, archaism for novelty, romance for reality. He is anti-social in-as-much as he strives to escape from the spirit of his time and non-progressive in so far as he tacitly denies the efficacy of accumulated knowledge. He does not stop to think that a trained painter of today is potentially a greater artist than a dead painter; that he is more skilful, since he profits by the experiments of past ages; that his vision is more refined; and that his materials are better. The utter silliness of his attitude is revealed by the ease with which he is fooled. There are scores of men who can and do paint any old masters to order. There is no great difficulty about it. Moreover the canvas or panel can be aged so well that even experts are deceived. Twenty years ago it was estimated there were 40,000 Corots in the United States, by now the number must be doubled. And the Rembrandts and Raphaels and Titians that were painted long after their ostensible creators were buried are without number. Any good art student with a little specialized training can do it. But it is reasonable to suppose that one of the masters they

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mock could have anticipated a good modern work with its tremendously enhanced authenticity and punch! Even if taste has its periodic lapses, perception has not.

But there are few who will not hesitate to admit that we have outgrown the old masters, that their works no longer satisfy the aesthetic standards of today. They are still generally approached with an awe which precludes discrimination and defeats criticism. It is a mercy that the outrageous prices demanded for them prevent all but the wealthiest among us from acquiring examples to hang in our homes....

Let us consider also the usual condition of an old master. It is never what it was once. Paintings deteriorate rapidly, sometimes they age more quickly than their creators; their skins crack and wrinkle, their pigmentation fades. The patina of age may be charming in some connections-though I can't think of any offhand-but it is offensive in paintings, since it represents physical dissolution. How often, alas, have I had to feign interest in the bones of a Gainsborough when, if I had been candid, I should have expressed my regret that it had not been decently buried years ago.... Maybe the farmer was unfortunate in his choice of words. "Second-hand" was not a happy expression in the circumstances, but if for that we substitute "antique" or "outmoded," it is clear that he had grasped the fundamentals of honest appreciation. I have since wondered whether, if the dealer had read the farmer's mind rightly, a few thousand dollars might have gone for modern paintings, preferably Canadian. In that case the farmer's art acreage would have been considerably greater than if he had acquired the Turner. But there we have the economic aspect of the matter. If the huge sums of money expended on the work of departed artists were diverted to the pockets of those who still survive it would be better for all concerned.

ARTISTS' NEED FOR APPRECIATION

[“Wet Paint,” 126-30; *The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 14 December 1935.]

Art was accepted more gratefully in ancient days than now. Cimabue's picture of the Virgin, which may still be seen in the church of Santa Marie Novella in the city of Florence was the object of so much admiration. We are told that it was carried in solemn procession with the sound of trumpets and other festal demonstrations, from the house of the artist to the church, he himself being highly rewarded and honoured for it.

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Allowing for the changes time has made in our habits of life and thought, it is hardly possible to imagine such enthusiasm now. A fine new picture is regarded with indifference, with admiration only by a few. The town band, the applause, the rewards and honours, are reserved for politicians and professional athletes.

Appreciation is the breath of life to the creative artist and in spite of modern conditions, there is enough abroad to sustain him. But his name is now legion; he competes with the dead as well as the living; and the rewards and honours seem attenuated by division. He must have appreciation, if only the adumbration of his own conceit. No painter can toil through the years and keep the graphic fruits of his fancy hidden.

There was a retired teacher in a cathedral town in England, who devoted his freedom to landscape painting in water-colour. He was a recluse; he never exhibited his work, yet he was satisfied and industrious. His water-colours, he told me, had been refused by the exhibitions and it was not from choice that he kept them locked away. He was convinced of their excellence, and afraid of criticism, but he made sure of posthumous glory for himself by leaving his entire collection to the city, with the usual stipulation that a gallery should be built to house it adequately. He purred when I praised stray passages of good colour, or skilful bits of drawing, and I fear vanity was the driving force. Take away a painter's vanity, said a famous landscape painter, and he will never touch a pencil again.

Is the artist impelled by spiritual forces, by the divine afflatus, by conscious or unconscious emulation of others? Do angels whisper in the ears of the chosen few and create for them visions of ethereal beauty? Do landscape painters of genius walk the plains of Heaven? Or is it only vanity that urges him to paint? I know of no book more revealing on the psychology of the matter than Benjamin Robert Haydon's *Autobiography*.³ He was abnormal; he had no genius as a painter; but if he had been anything but what he was the book never would have been written. Yet he wrote glibly of divine help; of working long hours in a semi-trance, oblivious of the passage of time, or the demands of his body. He was vanity personified. In his youth he said, "I will be a great artist," not "I will be an artist," forgetting that it is the humble that shall be exalted.... Humility counts for much, but it may be that vanity does not dispossess that admirable quality.

The syllogism, art for art's sake, refers to that kind of painting which disregards, or is contrary to, public taste. Since art exists for humanity it is not unreasonable to assume that humanity has some right in the

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matter. Who pays the piper calls the tune. An artist cannot be at once a rebel and a comfortable citizen. Haydon tried to force the heroic style upon unwilling patrons, and paid the penalty in poverty and neglect. The great majority of master-painters gave the public what it wanted, and were blessed in return with creature comfort. A few anticipated public taste, and were dead before they were appreciated like Cotman who, poor fellow, made desperate efforts to discover what exactly public taste might be.

It is the incompetent and the neglected artist who charges the public with ignorance, stupidity, and indifference. He raves loudly, but he is incomprehensible, even inarticulate, in his work. Such as he consider that popularity in their profession is synonymous with inability. While the application of this theory may be just in some cases, it is not so in all. A small section of the public-let us say the most ignorant section-will accept an artist who may be good or bad according to other standards, but the very fact of acceptance proves him to be intelligible and shows him able to amuse, to instruct, or to move his public spiritually, though not perhaps in a manner embodying the best of technique. He is a bigger man, however, than the long-haired fool who contrives to persuade some gin-drinking clique that his morbid pictorial monstrosities are true art. Schools of artists are forever trying to "educate" the public, and the process often involves the difficult necessity of being convinced of seeing that which does not exist-ghastly distortion, repulsive imperfection, screaming discord, cosmic craziness, and whatnot.

While it is discourteous to try to compel the public to buy this or that, it is the rankest rudeness to descend to vituperation when it refuses. The public is the tribunal before which all art is judged-not the critics or the academies. The public is the artist's only patron, and has certain fundamental rights. It will submit to education, and will respond to suggestion, but it will not be bullied. If then a young painter's thoughts run to plastic triangles or chromatic squares; if he perceives no relationship between nature and art, it is better that he should abandon the expression of his fancies, and escape disappointment. At the same time, it is true that no manner of expression, however crazy, is without its apologists, whose cloudy comprehension, is a mere pretence....

I am advocating not a slavish but a sane consideration of public opinion, I would rather emphasize the futility of anarchy in art and the mistake of regarding every new theory flouting tradition, as authentic or doctrinal. Tradition is a prop for social security. The student's ambition should be to become a painter's painter, rather than a popular painter.



Monastery, St. Norbert, 1915, Etching, 12.6 x 9.9 cm,
The Winnipeg Art Gallery.

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The approbation of fellow artists based on sympathy and understanding is manifestly better than the fickle or fast homage of the greater public....

The only criticism that can be made honestly and politely by one inexpert in art, was suggested by Whistler in reply to the critic who said that a certain picture was not up to the mark. "You should not say it is not good," said Whistler, "you should say you do not like it, and then, you're perfectly safe. Now come and have something you do like-have some whisky."

You may think that anyone equipped with practicable eyes and average intelligence is capable of judging, say, a portrait, particularly if he is acquainted with the subject. In the kindness of my heart I like to think so, but periodically my faith is shattered; I am confronted with some case of incredible obtuseness.

Robert Henri never tired of telling his pupils that it is harder to see than to express. "The whole value of art," he would say, "rests in the artist's ability to see well into what is before him. The model is wonderful in as many ways as there are pairs of eyes to see her. Each view of her is an original view and there is a response in her awaiting each view. If the eyes of Rembrandt are upon her she will rise in response and Rembrandt will draw what he sees, and it will be beautiful. The model will serve equally for a Rembrandt drawing or for anybody's magazine cover. A genius is one who can see."

The superlative kind of seeing described by Henri is obviously rare and beyond the ken of those unversed in art, but it serves to show that among artists the faculty of seeing, as distant from that of sight, is developed variably. Among educated people who are not artists the faculty very often is atrophied. The stock example is the apocryphal old lady who said to Turner, "I never saw all those colours in a sunset." He retorted, "Don't you wish you could, madam?"

I once enjoyed a long canoe trip with a professor who was very sure of his knowledge, but denied that there is colour in stars or in the aurora, that there is a patina of blue in a distant landscape, and that colours are reflected on adjacent surfaces. He was blind to half the beauty of nature.

The human skin provides a good reflecting surface and in shadow will absorb colour; it will assume the green of foliage, the red of fire, or the golden hue of sand. The painter who sees and records even such obvious facts, however, lays himself open to such remarks as, "Who ever saw green flesh," or, "That red looks like an open sore," or, "That fellow must have jaundice." This is not mere speculation; I have heard these remarks.

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Wilde's description of this smug attitude as impertinent is decidedly apt. It may proceed from the bliss of ignorance and a desire to be helpful rather than offensive. However that may be, it gives the painter a hopeless, hunted feeling. After a lifetime of study and hard labour, he feels he is unjustly castigated by rude comments from duffers. No wonder he takes refuge sometimes in the comfortable precincts of aestheticism, and proceeds to paint for his own, and for Art's sake.

For many years artists and art lovers have flocked to France and Italy, not only on account of the art treasures they may find there, but also because in those countries even the man on the street has some knowledge of art and some sympathy with artists. It is entirely a matter of schooling. Few of our schools or universities pay any attention whatever to any art save that of writing.

This is written in humility and without malice. I do not sneer at ignorance even among the educated, but merely describe the result of its impact upon the appreciation of the artist.

THE CULT OF CLUMSINESS

["Wet Paint," 68-9.]

Never in the history of painting has tradition been more sorely beset than in the years immediately proceeding and following the Great War. Now that Cubism and the subsequent depravities into which art had resolved, is as dead as the proverbial doornail, the writers who supported it are still busy with attempts to preserve their several dignities. Articles on such subjects as "What Cubism has given to Art" frequently appear in the journals. What these pseudo-modern schools of painting have actually lent to art is a disregard for good technique and a contempt for realism. There is now some little danger of the cult of clumsiness prevailing and this is nowhere more apparent than in prints from wood. Water-colour has not been altogether immune....

To the well-balanced mind such phases of art mean nothing. The true artist and the sane collector never will tolerate insincerity and impudence, but that section of the public which affects *vers libre*, the Moscow Theatre and jazz, affects also to recognize therein preponderant truths that escape the rest. They see in them, I suppose, a reflection of their own distorted aestheticism. Fortunately they are unwilling as a rule to bask their fancy when it comes to buying art of this type and gradually the savages who fabricate it are being starved out.

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Realism is condemned by those artists whose poverty of technique does not permit to express it. Only a short while ago, an exponent of “modernism” told me that “this stuff” was easy, although her parents, her instructors, her friends, and her own common sense had told her she would never make an artist. The cult of clumsiness, however, proved to be her salvation. Her work is frequently lauded.

The hard labour that is essential to accomplishment is, of course, the bugbear to these revolutionists. Their pictorial efforts are efforts at evasion. There are students so full of conceit that they imagine, being heaven-born, that work is unnecessary for them, but no genius ever existed but was sterile without labour....

MODERNISTIC VS. ACADEMIC:

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 20 March 1937.]

In consideration of the controversy still furiously waged by modernist and academic factions in art, it is interesting to recall Whistler’s dictum that the theory of any artist is a defense of his own position. Thus the protagonist of modernism must be the painter who is irked by the conventions and hidebound requirements of the academic school; he may be convinced of the inadequacy of that style of expression; he may be appalled by the tremendous labour involved in mastering it; he is often a snob, and sometimes he wants to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. In most cases he favors one aspect of modernism, and when one reviews the number of styles there are today that are classed under the generic title, one is more than ever convinced of the justice of Whistler’s remark.

The position is almost one of anarchy: each man a law unto himself. Picasso has professed the faith of a number of isms and has invented others. At times he is almost academic, and indeed it becomes increasingly hard to determine where one style ends and the other begins now that the extremists are losing ground....

Many a progressive artist considers himself academic, and vice versa. The fact is there is a confusion of meaning; few will agree on definitions of either one or the other. They are terms of reproach or commendation, vague and indefinite. To one man modern art means the graphic debauches of the irrationalists, to another the mordant crudity of a Cezannesque technique; while others of balanced mentality will ignore its extremer manifestations and define the term as progressive or evolutionary, qualities which might be equally

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apparent in the academic work of today also. Not, however, if by academic one means copied from nature in a dull manner without design or spirit....

It has become fashionable to admire modernism. Unfortunately the only characteristics recognizable by the layman belongs to the "mistakes" of that school-obviously bad drawing in imitation of the confessed weakness of Cezanne; glaring colour borrowed from Matisse and Van Gogh, but without their subtlety which they in turn borrowed from the poorer specimens of Japanese colour prints; over-simplification; gaucherie; irrationalism; negrism and so forth-all sham. This quaint and unmerited admiration would have been impossible but for the reams of copy written around this aspect of painting, particularly in favor of novelty and extremism. The writers-one might call them critics if they were more discriminative-have been, and mostly are, laymen. In England today three leading apologists for modernism are Herbert Read, a poet, John Barton, a schoolmaster, and Eric Newton, an artist, whose work is not strictly in harmony with his theories, and who could talk as well on the negative as on the affirmative side.

The controversy is at times exceedingly bitter, yet I am of the opinion that some basis of agreement would be found after friendly discussion, at least among the majority of the disputants. We are all for progress, but we are at the same time apt to be opinionated, prejudicial, argumentative, and ungenerous.

IMPUDENT BIDS FOR NOTORIETY

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 20 April 1940.]

Lewis Carroll once said: "In the next world I do hope that we shall not only see lovely forms, such as this world does not contain, but shall also be able to draw them." He did make drawings to illustrate the fantastic dream-world described in his Alice books, but they were poor, scrappy things. In this world it takes years of hard labour to learn to draw. I suppose he had neither the time nor the opportunity. But it is evident that he had sound ideas on the purpose of art, and the duty of artists. To unfold and display aspects of beauty may not be the immediate aim of every artist, but it is the ultimate aim. This has been disputed in recent years, and by so much enthusiasm by a certain class of publicists that doubts have arisen in the minds of many layment as to its truth. Art journals, galleries, newspapers, and critics, have encouraged a degraded

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type of art that possesses none of the attributes of beauty, save that of surprise. The movement has become a cult of sheer ugliness and unreason which, happily, seems to be defeating itself.

One of its leading exponents is Pablo Picasso, a Spaniard living in Paris. An exhibition of his amazing canvases is at present touring the United States, and should do much towards killing his reputation. Unfortunately there are posers in every community who claim to understand and enjoy such rubbish as this (it must amuse Picasso) and there are those who even buy it. I have not seen this exhibition, but I have examined a number of reproductions of its items. There was one in *Life*, full-page and in colour, entitled *Girl With a Cock.* The girl is represented in profile and full face at the same time and within the same oval, so that two eyes are indicated-I can't say drawn-on one cheek, and the mouth is smudged in twice. The cock's head is treated in the same way. This device is borrowed from childhood, but in my own recollection it was the habit of the unhealthy, backward, child, and is by no mean characteristic of childhood. The effect is hideous in the extreme. Yet the critics regard this monstrosity seriously, and affect to see reason and purpose behind it. Some of them rank Picasso as the world's greatest artist. They do not question his sincerity, although he denied his current credo practically every time a new ism was invented and adopted the new one. He has been in turn Cubist, Fauvist, Dadaist and Expressionist.

The fence-sitters-artists and critics who are not specially interested in the subvention of modernism, and who ought to know better-excuse Picasso's extravagances by reiterating like parrots – "Of course he can draw when he likes." Frank Rutter said he was a very fine craftsman of the highest quality. I have not yet discovered any truth in this theory, though I have seen many of his paintings. Others say his work is nobly experimental, tending to break the hold of the Grecian fallacy. To my mind such paintings are impudent bids for notoriety.

Kenneth Forbes, a Canadian portrait painter, was invited recently to go to Chicago to give an address in *Art and Reason*. He made it clear that modernism is a racket-that the public has been flaunted and deceived, and found an apt parallel in the story from Hans Anderson of the emperor who was persuaded by two vagabonds that they were the greatest weavers in the world. The emperor, being a vain man who spent most of his income in clothes, gave them money to set up a loom and to buy silk. The clothes they made, they said, had a magic quality of being invisible to stupid people.

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It was all pretence. They pretended to weave, and the courtiers raved over the beauty of the material, fearful of being thought stupid. They went through the motions of clothing the emperor until-as they said-the suit was finished. Everybody exclaimed at its beauty and grandeur. Everybody, that is, excepting one little girl who did not mind being called stupid. She said, "Why. The emperor has nothing on."

This world-wide hoax, originally perpetrated in the interests of a group of Parisian art-dealers, is dying hard because a multitude of stupid critics were duped and don't like to admit it.

THE AESTHETIC SENSE

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated.]

The aesthetic sense, though capable of development, is an atavistic trait. Man admires certain proportions in form and abominates others; he prefers the proper juxtaposition of particular colours and likes some qualities of line. These predilections combined, constitute the elements of visual beauty Proportion is subject to a mathematical formula discovered and utilized by the ancient Greeks. Buildings designed to conform to this law remain models of perfection above criticism.

Why should we be unanimous in deciding that one shape is more beautiful than another; why should an oblong be more agreeable to the eye than a square, an ovoid than a circle, or a line with a slight curve in it than a straight one or an arc? I think the reason is obvious. Man was created in God's image-but while that may be kept in mind it is not essential to the argument. Man, shall we say, a gregarious soul, was born with a capacity for love and admiration for his fellows, and for himself; the perpetuation of his species depended to a great extent upon this instinct. The lithe forms of young men and young women were ever a delight to his eye, the most delectable forms in his universe. The glorification of the body, the worship of physical perfection, condemned as paganism, is surely a rational as it is a natural idea. Art in ancient Greece was its complete expression. All of beauty, as conceived by man, is contained in his person. "The whole of art," said Rodin, "lies in the human body."

Let us first consider line. Artists have at times created lines which, in their estimation, embody the virtues of strength and pride and dignity. Hogarth's line of beauty is perhaps better known than the others and though described as resembling a shepherd's crook, it is nothing more or less than a symbol of

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man - or rather a diagram of the perfect balance of his erect God-like carriage - the crook representing the head and the profile of a noble chest; the staff the straight and firm line from the chest to the toes. Indeed it is impossible to conceive a line of greater beauty and significance....

Everyone knows that the Greeks applied their discovery in design and that architects today do so too when they design classical buildings. A few years ago a Canadian designer who lived in New York, investigated the matter and published his conclusions in a series of books, under the general title of *Dynamic Symmetry*.⁷ A great many enthusiastic painters began to base their compositions on these lines and instead of relying on the eye as before, used a ruler and a square. The inconsistency of this departure is obvious for if the knowledge of perfect proportion is instinctive, the necessity for employing mechanical means does not exist. It is a fact that, without exception, all the pictures that are considered great comply with the law. But all the things that we make for use or ornament may and should also possess charm in proportion - window openings for example, or the page of a book, or furniture. Greek philosophers believed that that principle they had evolved was a secret wrested from nature, that it played a part in the rhythmic impulse of creation. They called the world *cosmos*, which means orderly beauty, believing that it was created in accordance with certain laws that govern these principles. I fear my own explanation is less poetic, if more exact. I believe that the principles of beauty are immanent in the mind of man, not in the universe, and that they are derived from God's image. If the aesthetic sense is indeed universal as it appears to be, then this might be so....

THE CAMERA IN ART: THE FOE TO GRAPHIC ART

[*"Wet Paint," 40-1*]

While the practice - associated mostly with portraiture - of painting on sensitized canvas or ivory over a photograph, or over a reflected image may be right and proper when pursued by a master, it is more often a substitute for inadequate draughtsmanship. The question is often asked, is the camera of any use to the artist? When photography first became popular, it was freely predicted that it would supplant painting and thus would terminate the artist's period of usefulness. Nothing of the kind has happened, but the new craft has served

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to emphasize the importance of selection and arrangement in picture making by virtue of the fact that its capacity is limited to literal representation.

My own experience is that a rough pencil note is far more valuable than a snap-shot and I never heard of a landscape painter who thought otherwise. Many cherish the idea that a photograph is an exact presentment of nature and accept without question the paradox that a photograph cannot lie. Actually there never was a more unmitigated liar. Not only does a lens distort form, but the ordinary plate makes an unholy mess of colour in its tone relations. Yellow becomes black and blue white. Black sunflowers against a white sky-what a travesty!

Distortion is one way and another is nearly always present in photograph and this defect has been used for a dishonest corroboration of the angler's story of the mythical and monstrous fish he caught. The family group is familiar, with baby in front, good-tempered perhaps, but many sizes too large, being out of focus. But the most amusing distortions are those produced by the telescopic lens which contrives to eliminate perspective completely. The small camera we take with us on vacation gives pitiable records of the mountains we have climbed; they have shrunk to mere molehills by the time we get them home. And this is not, as the misguided enthusiast assures us, because of the wide angle of lens vision, but because it is not in the nature of lenses to tell the whole truth. They are instruments of exaggeration and belittlement.

Action pictures at first were thought to eclipse anything that a draughtsman could produce, but when the novelty wore off snaps of a horse galloping, or of a man walking, were admitted to be ungainly, unconvincing and almost unnatural-very different to the artist's accepted statement of similar actions. The latter more logically depicted action in its arrested phases-moments of rest at the beginning of a movement, the peak, the end-which are the only phases the human eye perceives and thus can accept as expressive. These moments are difficult to catch and are, indeed rarely caught by the camera, especially in rapid action. The snap shot is of little use in the studio.

Moving water as recorded by the camera, has an immanent rigidity, which suggests corrugated iron or ice. The artist who paints it successfully arranges his lines and masses rhythmically so that ripples and waves seem wet, limpid and lively. What he paints is not a replica of the scene before him, not a series of portraits of individual ripples, but a pattern representing an epitome of the whole movement.

Artistic photographs are produced-it would be foolish to deny it-but many of them only after an arduous faking of the plate or the print, which opens the

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question as to whether a photographer, skilful enough to fake, would not be better employed with a brush, a box of paints, and a clean sheet of paper.

AN APOLOGY FOR DRESS

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 15 January 1938.]

I suppose the large majority of modern artists are staid, responsible individuals, who never neglect to vote, to take a bath on Saturdays, and to put the cat out at night, but for some reason or other the popular conception of these homely men is vastly different. The idea still lingers that a painter is of necessity a gay dog, a little touched in the head, and clothed untidily in garments peculiar to the profession, and, I fancy, the idea has persisted since the exploits of Buffalmaccio and his companions crept into the stories of Boccaccio 500 years ago. That seems a long time for a misconception to persist but persist it does.

Because I belong to the conservative class, dress as other men, visit the barber at regular intervals, and behave, I hope, in a rational manner, I am frequently made to feel a fraud.

Introduced to strangers as "Mr. Phillips-the artist," I am eyed with suspicion. More often than not I am embarrassed by such remarks as this. "Oh, I expected to see a little man with whiskers and a velvet coat." What can one do but apologize...!

I have often thought it would be easier to follow the example of some of my professional friends, and make some trifling concession to this venerable theory—a little more hair perhaps on the chin, or the back of the head; a Byronic tie; a black fedora with a generous brim; a Whistlerian cape. The adoption of any one of these items might prove to be that "touch harmonious" which, according to Samuel Johnson, would resuscitate the bank account.

There have always been among us those like Buffalmaccio whose insouciance, playfulness, and instability rank them indubitably as artists in the public estimation, no matter how badly they paint, but one meets them less frequently nowadays. Respectability has invaded the profession. More than a hundred years ago Sir William Beechey remarked on its baleful influence, and deplored the "refinement and moderation in liquor" that had come over his fellow academicians.

Richard Wilson was an older man than Beechey, but on this point they were in happy accord. Wilson was fond-too fond-of his pot of porter.

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When Zoffany painted his famous Academy group (in which the two lady members are grudgingly admitted, but only as framed portraits hanging on the wall at the back) he represented Wilson holding a great tankard full of his favorite beverage.

The sequel supports Beechey's contention: Wilson provided himself with a cudgel, and threatened to break it over Zoffany's head if he did not take out the tankard....



SKETCHING IN CANADA

SEASONS: WINTER

[“Wet Paint,” 13-14; *The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 15 April 1939.]

I LIKE TO SKETCH the year round, in summer when conditions are most comfortable, as well as in winter when one is liable to freeze to death. Each season has its charm, and gives way to the next before one’s visual digestion is ruined by repletion. The mildest day of a prairie winter is far too cold for water-colour sketching, but the problem is not insoluble, it may even be evaded luxuriously by painting from a window or a closed car....

Coloured chalks, pastels, charcoal and pencil, aren’t affected by the cold and may be used instead of water-colour, for as long as the sketcher continues immune also. At thirty or forty degrees below zero, the fingers stiffen very quickly without protection. Woollen gloves are clumsy but permit the use of pencil, but a sock is the best protection of all. It is pulled over the hand and the pencil point thrust through the toe. The fingers thus have full play and will keep warm, provided the sock is thick enough. The number of lines drawn depends upon the temperature.... Nature in the nude presents few graphic complications. The earth rests under a smooth coverlet of snow; and only its major undulations are indicated.

The problem of painting snow is of colour rather than of line. Its surface is highly reflective and its borrowed hues are vibrant Snow assumes a great variety of colours, depending on the quality of light, and also on the sky, which it reflects. With the sun on your right or your left you see deep blue shadows on the surface of the snow wherever anything protects it from his rays. That is the blue of the zenith. Within the blue shadow you may see tinges of other colours, reflected back, perhaps, from the object—the red barn or the hay-rick-to which it belongs. Then, when the snow mantle lays in folds, some parts will borrow greener hues from the sky immediately above the

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horizon. And when the sun is low he radiates a warmer, rosier light, and shadow seems greener still within its contours. This is the effect that Choultze always paints-pink-flushed snow, and blue-green shadow In oil this vibrant quality is more easily suggested than in water-colour, but something of its purity and sparkle may be represented by mixing colour on the paper rather than on the palette; cobalt, cadmium red, and viridian in the shadows and the same pigments with cadmium deep substituted for viridian in varying proportions in the sunshine Those who have neglected to train their eyes to see the hues miss one of nature's most subtle manifestations of beauty! Snow changes colour constantly, in sympathy with its surroundings, particularly the sky, but so delicate is its coloration at all times that few of us are aware of it.

Rime on the trees is one of the joyous sights of winter. The low sun behind their stark forms might be the apple of gold in pictures of silver like the word aptly spoken. Their hoary heads are crowns of glory, exquisite patterns of filigreed silver, silhouettes of cold purity. Towards the north an unfamiliar whiteness clothes the visible world-you call it white, but when the sun hits the tree-tops it becomes evident that white is only a relative term. White, indeed, does not occur in nature. Here is actually a palpitating iridescence, the gray of the opal fired by flashes of sunlight. To walk along the street, or in the woods, enveloped in this brilliance, is an experience that never fails to beget an exaltation of spirit. The unreality of the scene brings wonderment too. The beauty is balm to the soul....

SEASONS: EARLY SPRING

[“Wet Paint,” p.16.]

Just as ardently as he wished for the snow, the prairie painter welcomes its evaporation. He has had a surfeit of snow. He has occupied himself with other things; he has made a few pencil drawings out-of-doors, and he cannot help but regard the past season as a period of hibernation. He longs to feel the sun and the wind on his brow, to walk over precambrian rocks, and fill his lungs with the beneficent air. Fortunately it is possible to do these things. There are warm days though snow patches linger in the deep woods and upon the northern slopes, when the sap is flowing and spring is on the way.

I have in mind the Lake of the Woods visited many times at this season. Once I failed to foretell the warmer days, and I was in immediate trouble.

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The colour was indescribably lovely. A few meandering channels cleft the ice-strips of blue in a pallid harmony of grays, snow lay in white accents on the sheltered shores of the islands, and beneath the trees, which in the middle distance and beyond were brown in hue. In the foreground were yellow tufts of dead grasses amidst the snow. The only greens of any brilliance were in the mosses on the rocks.

Entrancing colour! The pencil seemed inadequate, and in spite of a searching wind I sat in the snow and began to sketch in colour. But the washes of paint congealed. I painted in slush and ice-crystals, achieving absolute realism for once. When I laid a brush aside for a moment it acquired the hardness of a stiletto. By taking care that the sun shone on my sketch continually I contrived to finish, but the result was far from perfect and elicited jeers from my companion, who was blessed with an extra pair of socks, youth, and a box of oil paints....

SEASONS: SPRING

[“Wet Paint,” p.18.]

When we become tired of the grays and browns of the nude earth, weary of the unfriendly weather that obscures its beauty and chills the ardour it inspires, warmer days clothe the landscape with delicate diffusions of green and gold. Spring has come. There is still a chance to learn more of the anatomy of trees. There are new effects of colour. No voracious insects are abroad as yet. There are few physical discomforts; it is a grand time for sketchers....

SEASONS: SUMMER

[“Wet Paint,” p.18-19.]

At midsummer the prevailing, everlasting and monotonous green often sends the artist hurrying to the mountains or the seacoast, chased by swarms of mosquitoes. I spent one memorable night on a tiny remote island on Lake of the Woods. I had neglected to provide myself with cheesecloth or netting, so my head was under a blanket but the noise the pestilent insects made, quarrelling for standing room on the tip of my nose, was infernal and rendered sleep impossible. I was up before daylight and put in the longest sketching day of my experience, beginning with a sketch of the sunrise and ending when it was too dark to see the sunset. There were short intervals for meals.

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That night we rowed as far away from land as we could, extended ourselves as comfortably as might be along the floor boards of the boat, and incidentally under the seats, letting the boat drift we composed ourselves to sleep, happy in the thought that we had fooled the mosquitoes for once.

Some summer seasons and some districts know not the mosquito. Two of the most delightful summers I have ever known were spent at Lake Muskoka. The greens were as triumphant there as elsewhere, but I refused to let them annoy me. The weather was glorious, the air was soft, the sandy shores inciting, and, best of all, no battalion of mosquitoes rose to the attack when one left the shelter of the cottage, no insectile Amazon pierced one's shrinking epidermis with her horny proboscis. It was impossible to stay indoors. My young family disported itself in the water and along the shore all day long. Here was an exceptional opportunity. I made sketches of the children nude or in bathing suits. They made splendid willing models.

There were interesting effects in pure landscape to sketch at intervals—a squall on the lake—golden-rod in the rain—blood-red maples in September, but every clear day the children and I worked together.

SEASONS: AUTUMN

[“Wet Paint,” p.15, 22-23.]

Some would have us believe that the spirit of autumn inspires desperate thoughts, that the decay and despair in nature invokes sadness in ourselves. I saw a cottonwood at Headingly that was a lyric instead of a dirge. Its quivering leaves were yellow in every conceivable tone. It stood on the river-bank. The sky was a tender blue, low in tone behind it, and the river a deeper blue. A group of farm buildings on the opposite bank, upon which red paint had been applied in inelegant patches, added enough interest for a picture. I can imagine no gayer sight at any season.

A week later the magnificent elms that grow between the road and the river at this spot presented a gorgeous sight, a harmony of rich and vivid brown like the brown of a wallflower, with gray, for the sky was overcast. The noble shapes of the trees, their receding boles along the roadside, and the river beyond, made the original theme pictorially articulate. While painting it introspection was difficult, owing to a cold wind which caused a certain amount of physical discomfort without spoiling my sense of beauty....



Summer Idyll, 1926, Colour woodcut, 45.6 x 31.1 cm,
The Winnipeg Art Gallery.

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I shall never forget the extraordinary sensation of standing in a copse of young poplars whose leaves, sered by an early frost, had turned an even yellow. The trees were high enough to form a partial canopy that obscured the burning sky, and I was shrouded, enwrapped, enmeshed, and circumvested in gold. It is the sense of unfamiliar envelopment, that is impressive, whether in the living grays of hoar frost, the crimson of the heavens at sunset, or the golden suffusions of autumn.

Thus the year dies, with few regrets from most of us. When the last leaf flutters from the ground, we are already looking forward to the spring.

SEASONS: THE SKETCHING SEASON OPENS

["Pictures on the Wall," 4-7.]

When spring is here the sketcher begins to look over his equipment and relishes in anticipation the soothing hours he will spend in the open, warmed by the sun, fanned by the breeze, charmed by the manifold delights in nature. The matter of equipment is important. It must be overhauled as carefully as the angler's tackle, replenished if necessary and improved if possible. It must be compact and portable, yet practicable.

The sketcher is interested in new devices that augment these qualities; if he is experienced he has no doubt invented such devices himself. In any case he likes to hear how the other fellow equips himself for this engrossing quest for beauty in landscape.

One will cut down his material to the minimum so that he may walk without undue fatigue, while another will burden himself with a lot of things. It all depends. Richard Meryman, a famous U.S. painter ...with whom I once sketched in the mountains, lugged about a heavy easel and a six-foot canvas, and a huge sketching umbrella. But he never strayed far from his car.

He must have had a couple of hundred brushes, and pounds of paint. He laughed at the simple needs of my method, but I could go where he could never hope to follow. He was as convinced of the good sense of his own ways as I was of mine.

The essentials are something to paint on and something to paint with. To these one usually adds something to sit on; but this is not always a necessity. In the hills and by the lakes there is always a ledge of rock, a bed of heather, a boulder or a root of a tree, which will rest the bones and provide a suitable elevation.

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The stool, however, is never really cumbersome. Mine is a folding three-legged affair. The wooden legs fold up to form a smooth, round, stick, which is carried in the hand, and the detachable leather triangle forming the seat goes in my rucksack with all the rest of my things-materials, and lunch, and a sweater on occasion. The rucksack rests on my back and even when full its weight is negligible....

Fully equipped, I carry only a billet in my hand and a bag on my back, which is not much of a burden. There are more comfortable seats, but they are awkward and heavy and there are less comfortable ones, such as the English shooting-stick. My own combines the virtues of comparative comfort and utility. The same type, fitted with a webbing seat, is stocked by most dealers in artist's materials. This seat may as well be thrown away at once; it is a snare rather than a seat, a specious token of security apt to collapse at any moment, if one's figure is too generously padded. Making these same remarks to a former class, I once set up my tripod and padded the leather top affectionately. Then, deriding the inferior seats with which my pupils were provided, I sat down with heavy emphasis-too heavy as it turned out, for my stool collapsed and I with it, feeling very embarrassed. Even a leather top will not last forever.

The sketcher in oils is well served by the modern box, containing his colours, his brushes, palette, and mediums, and fitted with a lid which accommodates his wooden panels or canvases, and which is used as an easel. This outfit is the simplest yet devised, but much heavier than that of the water-colourist. The latter needs only two brushes, a water-bottle with a fitted cup, a palette and a piece of paper.

It is remarkable how little intelligence went into the manufacture-or, rather, the design-of water-colour boxes. Formerly the inlaid water-colour box, divided into little compartments holding forty or so cakes of pigment, some brushes, a glass dish for water, and a porcelain palette, was considered to be the acme of perfection, as it certainly was of expense and clumsiness. Even now the sketcher is required to balance his whole stock of pigments on his thumb while he paints, since the lid of his box is his palette, and some recent models have the water-bottle attached to the box also. I buy my paints in tubes, and squeeze out enough on a folding metal palette, which is a true palette and not a warehouse. I leave the tubes at home when I go sketching.

There remains only paper to discuss. I never use a 'block' which is a sheet of cardboard supporting some twenty-four sheets of paper bound together at the edges. The paper cockles unpleasantly. Many water-colourists prepare

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paper by pasting it on a sheet of cardboard. I don't. I like a more solid panel, which I can hold with my knees instead of with my hands; I would rather have my hands free. Formerly I used a double frame. The only objection to that is that the edges of the paper came out a mangled mass. Now I have two light boards of three-ply wood, measuring eighteen inches by thirteen. I soak the paper in water until it expands a little and fasten it down with 1! 2 inch gum-tape. My panels are of the size to take a quarter of an Imperial sheet of paper, so that there is no waste. When my sketch is finished, the edging of brown gum-paper is stripped, then wetted and scraped until a clean white border remains. The sketch is thus as fit to display as if it were matted. Sketchers soon determine what pigments suit them and how many. My selection varies. Right now my palette holds yellow ochre, pale cadmium yellow, Indian yellow, French ultramarine, monastral blue, light red (Venetial), alizarin rose madder, cadmium red (light), burnt sienna, raw umber, monastral green, Mars violet. Many a time, grossly deceived by my satchel and stool-stock someone enquires, "How're they biting?" In the same friendly spirit let me express the hope that, having your tackle, all you sketchers may have a good catch this season.

SEASONS: COMPANIONS

[*"Wet Paint,"* 47-49.]

The sketcher is necessarily a lone hunter, absorbed when painting, looking inward as well as out upon nature, and concentrating every faculty on the work in hand, but he is as gregarious as the rest of his kind. A companion is an important part of his equipment, and if conversation lags in the field, it quickens around the camp-fire when his work is over for the day. For my own part I detest solitary sketching, and consider a helpless puddler, a Sphinx, a windbag, or a Philistine, a better companion than none at all. I still have unpleasant recollections of a lonely period in a tent in the Transvaal when I once crawled, sick with fever, under my camp-bed to escape the fierce sun which penetrated even the canvas. Tom Thompson might be alive to-day had there been a friend to sustain him when his canoe capsized on that last journey in Algonquin.

A better man than you are stirs your ambition which is all to the good. The propinquity of a less experienced mortal arouses in you the need for an even greater measure of worthiness to hold his regard. But much

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profound thought still leaves me uncertain as to what I have learned from certain people with whom I have been associated. There was one who borrowed my paints and pitied me for the slightness of my genius as compared with his own. Another set fire to a wooded island and left me to put it out.

Frank tipped gaily about and made the forest ring with excerpts from the operas, delivered in a high and robust tenor. He finished a fine landscape in twenty minutes, noisily. Incredible speed! Once we walked over a hill that had been swept by fire. The mosses had gone and the under-growth too. Only bare granite remained and the stumps of trees whose roots were shaped to the rocks over which they had grown. Only the thicker roots were left supporting what remained of the boles. These pitiable remnants may be moved from one spot to another, just like the portable hat-rack which they resemble, and it was infinitely diverting to see my companion jocosely arranging his forest according to the demands of dynamic symmetry. His carefree attitude and his tremendous energy infected others so that even mislaid high notes, when he sang, did not seriously impair his solid worth.

There is the person who hides his sketch, the lazy man, the copyist, and the trailer, all, if any other type is available, to be avoided by the artist. The lazy fellow may have redeeming qualities, but those of the copyist are negative and such is his personality. I have travelled with one who combined the chief failings of both! His Yes was chronic. He trailed behind until I had selected a subject to paint, and then he sat with his knees in my back and simulated all my gestures. My only satisfaction lay in choosing positions with a natural hazard immediately behind them -a hornet's nest, a thorn bush, or a precipice. Most of my sketching companions, however, have been agreeable, practical and interesting. One is apt to accept such qualities thoughtlessly, and they do not impress the mind so much as do their opposites.

Tom McLean accompanied me on a sketching trip in the Rockies. He is a quiet reliable fellow and inspires confidence. When we dropped off the train in the midst of the mountains, I knew that our supplies were safe, that pack-ponies would materialize, and that we should make camp comfortably before night. That required a good deal of confidence, for, as far as we could see, we were the only men in the world. After a long hike we reached a green lake overshadowed by precipitous mountains. A tumbling glacial stream roared a welcome. Here Tom's halo shone brilliantly. He is an expert woodsman, and though we found tent-poles of an adequate length that needed no trimming, he was able to make play with his axe, by lopping off balsam boughs for our beds. He also fastened our two sides of bacon to the end of a long and slender

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pole, which he erected to foil the evident hopes of the black bear that thought-fully, and somewhat impatiently, licked his chops a dozen yards away. For the same reason we constructed a larder and hoisted that up too, the bear groaned and lurched away muttering.

Tom had one failing: he would not get up in the morning and cook breakfast. But he made up for that manfully by doing nearly everything else. He liked to sketch alone, and frequently we were in undisputed possession of a mountain apiece. But we met invariably at midday, some-where on the heights, to fry bacon on slabs of slate, eat, and smoke a pipe. When, on one occasion, I shivered in a blizzard beneath a glacier, I thought of Tom, and hastened in the direction he had taken some hours before. Sure enough, he was smoking comfortably under a rocky ledge, by a roaring fire. Where on earth he got the wood-we were away above the timber line-I never knew. Tom was an excellent provider, a famous victualler, and a charming host.

SEASONS: WILD ANIMALS

["Wet Paint," 44-45; "Pictures on the Wall." 13-14.]

The sketcher often prefers to make a thorough study, to take his fill of an exquisite and enchanting view spread out before him. There are other things besides the view. The enveloping air, spiced with ambrosia, caressing sunshine, the murmuring of streams, the whispering of leaves, which impress themselves upon his conscious mind. His silence and his comparative immobility, the results of complete absorption in his work, encourages all the wild things to show themselves.

One day I sat by the roadside, feet dangling over the water, making a sketch when I heard an uproar from the east and pounding hooves. In a moment a big moose rounded the corner, head down, his wide antlers capable of sweeping aside anything that blocked his path, including myself, I thought. I couldn't get up quickly, so I reached for my camera. He skidded to a stop when he saw he. "Another damn tourist," I could hear him say. And he jumped into the lake in disgust.

Big-horn sheep frequent this spot. They eat the soil under the banks at the roadside. In the summer ewes and lambs alone appear and in the fall the rams wander down from loftier haunts. There is often a flock of twenty and they remain in this spot all day giving the sketcher plenty of time for drawing. They are very curious. I was once sketching on the

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mountain-side just above the lake. My wife was reading down below. She called up, "Who's your pal?" I looked around and nearly rubbed noses with a ewe which was very interested in what I was doing, and was apparently a little near-sighted....

Golden Mantled ground squirrels are greedy as well as inquisitive and sometimes attack me in packs, searching my pockets for food, my rucksack, scrambling over my palette, and over my drawing, greatly persistent. They smell my lunch I suppose; black bears certainly do.... A mountain lion dogged my heels coming down the steep trail from Lake Oesa to O'Hara. "Where did you pick up that yellow dog?" Gladys asked.... Once I paused to admire the markings of a snake which slithered over my foot. My admiration on that occasion was somewhat tempered by other feelings. Once a mink crawled out of the water two yards away, and lay down panting in front of me, looking up with brown and confident eyes. I have watched badgers, deer, black bears-nearly all the commoner wild beasts for long periods at close range.

Once I was sketching in the Rockies, my legs dangling over a lofty ledge, utterly alone. The warm silence was made musical by droning bees, tinkling water, and the bass rumble of falling rocks, but it was suddenly rent by a shattering whistle at the back of my neck. I was in danger of falling off the mountain. But it was only a friendly marmot who craved for some chocolate. A more serious meeting occurred in Griqualand, South Africa. I was wandering through a park-like grove of tall bushes, whose foliage trailed in the dust and limited my range of vision to a very few yards, hoping to bag a sketch, or a guinea fowl for breakfast. I was equipped for either but totally unprepared for what did happen. As I crept round a quarry-bush I came suddenly upon two large baboons. They stood erect, engaged apparently in a sociable dialogue. I could have touched either, and, worse still, they could have grabbed me. Fortunately they ambled off, as disconcerted as myself. Once I was pestered by small monkeys, who threw berries at me from the higher branches of a tree under whose shade I was working. The beauty and wonder of Nature are as alluring as the pursuit of Art, and made of me a landscape painter.

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS: MUSKOKA LAKES

[“Pictures on the Wall,” 14-16.]

We were spending the summer of 1924 on the Muskoka Lakes. Of all the places I have seen none seemed to possess so many agreeable features. It

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goes without saying that a good sketching ground must have natural beauty, but the conditions it offers must be such that its beauty may be enjoyed without distraction or discomfort. This was always the case at Muskoka.

We rented a lovely, roomy cottage on Big Island. It stood on a dome of clean granite overlooking the lake towards the sunset. A dense, almost impenetrable forest covers the island. It shelters deer and bears no doubt. We had no ambition to lose ourselves in its gloomy depths, our interest lay in the open, on the water, and along the shore. A few steps down the northern slope of the rocky dome took us to the boat-house in a little bay-a delectable bay with a sandy beach. In the other direction -south-was a larger bay that had no sand. From our verandah we looked across three miles or more of water. To the right and to the left were small islands, some high, some low, and vastly different in character. A mile to the south there was one we called Baldy-a high, bare rock, with luxuriant white pine and wild fruit trees at its base, for all the world like a tonsured head. The lush growth is remarked by those who are accustomed to the starved and stunted vegetation of more northerly lakes. We spent many happy days on Baldy-if not to paint, then to climb the rock, to picnic, or merely to lie on a brown bed of pine needles in the shade of the trees, and read or rest.

Most of our journeys were made by water. There was a path around the bay by the boat-house, but we did not always go that way, even when we were invited to a tea-party at Rutherford's. We swam over, all seven of us. Six year old Lois made it easily. A long pull in the boat brought us to Gull Island-a castellated rock, white with bird-lime, with a few twisted pines and no undergrowth.... Once every week the boat called to take us to Bracebridge, which lies on the mainland to the east. The boat was large enough to rate a captain with a nautical cap. It carried us around the north end of the island, past smaller islands and six miles up the river. That was a beautiful river, thickly hung with trees and affording occasional glimpses of pasturage, cultivated lands, and farm buildings.... I remember a conical grassy hillock overgrown with mullein.

Lakes, islands, rocks, and fine trees in association provided a wealth of beauty readily accessible. The air was always balmy; insects were not troublesome-at least by the water. Consequently it was possible to pose models in the open without danger from frost, from mosquito bites, or sunstroke-an advantage for me. Painting either landscape or figures in the open-air could be accomplished in such comfort as I had never enjoyed before....

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS:
I LIKE WATERFALLS

["Pictures on the Wall," 30-32.]

I do not mind confessing that I like waterfalls. Every time I stand before a presentable specimen I echo the words Richard Wilson addressed to the Falls of Terni, "Well done water, by Gad."

Unstable as water, they used to say, forgetting that water has the greater power compared with rock, and that, partly because of its instability, it can move mountains. Good landscape painters ignore this base insinuation. They wallow in waterfalls. They realize that instability is not necessarily a sin, but "the supreme quality of transience which puts the keenest edge on beauty" as Mrs. Miniver observed when the fireworks went off.

My own interest in the matter began far away and long ago-on the moors of Yorkshire to be precise, when I was a child. We lived in Howarth, at the foot of the hill. Now and then we were let loose in the heather to pick bilberries, and on rare occasions we were taken on a picnic. To our elders the logical place for the latter diversion was Charlotte Bronte's waterfall, and there we always went. I have seen photographs of it since, and it does not seem very attractive-a trickle of peaty water on the barren moor. I suppose it held some interest for us at that time. At least it was the best part of a wholly objectionable business. I recall the perennial mint patty-how I hated it-and the interminable walk.

The imprisoned waters of a lake are passive and reflect only the moods of the weather. Overflowing, the stream seeks lower levels and only the lie of the land has much influence upon it. Falls, as we are told, are typical of regions where streams are young or immature, not having had time to grade their courses. Here is water in all its forms-the clear stream, foam, spray and still smaller drops suspended in the air-a translucent veil in which a rainbow is often woven. And the textures! What is sleeker than the lip of the fall, rougher, yet more transient and inconstant than the broken water of the spill, or more diaphanous than the rising mist. Smooth water above-the current distorting but not breaking the reflections of trees and rocks and sky upon its shining face; broken water below-a medley of white water and foam, pieces of sky, fragments of foliage that surprisingly fall into a rhythmic patter.

Water is the most expressive element in nature. It responds to every mood from tranquility to turbulence. The bubbling spring engenders and supports life; the raging torrent and the remorseless flood may be the instruments of its destruction.

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The surface of still water is our standard of horizontality, which is the well-spring of peace and repose. Even falling water induces little emotional disturbance, for vertical lines are also static. Thus a waterfall may induce pleasurable thoughts, and even its roar may be soothing.

Once I saw a sketch of Tom Thomson's of a waterfall in the woods. It was not a voluminous or a spectacular fall, but a mere runnel with perhaps a ten-foot drop. It was viewed between the slender boles of birch or poplar, against a background of dense foliage, and it composed so beautifully that it has stayed in my memory for years. The pattern that impressed me was no doubt the creation of the artist, but the material that inspired it he found in that spot in the forest, and I doubt that he falsified it at all.

I first paddled up Rushing River, Lake of the Woods, more than thirty years ago. It was a long trip at that time—a run in the launch to Blindfold Lake—portaging the canoe over the falls there—a five-mile paddle to the river. Now a road crosses the river just above the falls.

I shall never forget that first visit. An hour's paddling in the hot sun brought us to the river. As we proceeded the cool shade of overhanging trees and the propinquity of the water were very refreshing. In the depths of the clear stream I saw fish darting; I watched with enjoyment the new vista that each turn of the stream revealed and the banks as we sped by them—moss-covered rocks, white birch-boles, wild rice, white lilies. The forest wove its spell about us. Once we chanced on a scene straight from the pages of Fennimore Cooper—a young Indian girl plucking a water-lily to put in her hair. A little further on was a small clearing on which were pitched a group of birch-bark teepees. Then came the murmur of falling water—faint at first, but attaining the dimensions of a roar as we progressed, and by-and-by, negotiating the ultimate turn, we saw the falls, a gleaming slash of white across rich verdure and gray granite.

It is not a large waterfall, but none has pleased me more. Perhaps the magic of the moment, or the charm of the setting, or the cumulative interest of the approach with that dramatic crescendo of sound at the end—whatever it was, I cannot forget the sight nor the sound of that remote little fall....

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS: BOUNDARY FALLS

[“I Like Waterfalls,” typescript, Crabb Collection, 5-8.]

We set off from the Red River at Winnipeg in a small sea-plane one raw, cloudy day, late in autumn. In a very few minutes we were looking down

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on Lake Winnipeg. Gobbets of vapor, blown from the north, scurried past us in serried succession like an invading host. Strange in colour, these ragged clouds were blue-gray above and brown below. The lake looked very cold. We turned east to follow the course of Winnipeg River.

The earth beneath assumed the appearance of a monstrous rug at times, with patterns of gold and yellow, and rare though delicious green, upon a ground of dark olive, relieved by silver streams and glistening pools-elements analogous to those used in the old Persian garden car-pets. There was more pattern on a grand scale than I had expected. The brilliant autumnal hues of the deciduous trees girdled the lakes and lined the rivers ... Towards the middle of the afternoon we began to peer ahead into the maze of waterways in order to identify our river and falls whose contours were familiar from the map. The lakes were countless in number; each had a golden frame; many were studded with little islands. Between the lakes were crumpled ridges of granite. The higher ridges were felt rather than seen, producing a slight tremor as the ship passed through a rising current of air. The earth looked very flat.

Boundary Falls at last. We circled the adjacent lake twice, banking steeply so that the pilot might select the safest landing. There were no rocks or obstructions that we could see. We came down and taxied towards a convenient shelf of rock on the shoreline, and there we disembarked. As the plane was descending so were our spirits. We perceived we were landing far from the falls. There was nothing we could do about it; wind and water, said the pilot, prevented a nearer approach. He still had to seek a lake even more remote and promised to return in ninety minutes. We waved a farewell as he left us and shouldered our packs without delay and made off up the steep hillside through the dense bush.

Walking was exceedingly difficult. Deadfalls, precipitous rocks, tangled thickets, proclaimed this a wilderness. There was a trail, it is true, but it was a game trail, suited only to progression on all fours. The fresh spoor of a bear was easily discernible; deer had passed that way; but we caught sight of none of them. Bill Pearce, my companion, who was not dressed for this kind of adventure, tore his clothes badly. Both of us acquired scratches in various parts of our anatomies. This may read as though we were green horns, but each had a load on his back and both hands full....

In forty minutes we gained the falls. We might have been going until sunset had we not cached some of Bill's equipment earlier. We approached the constricted river over bare, salmon-pink rock, and saw gray water

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churned into white. A background of dark pines was relieved by the brilliant yellow foliage of birch and poplar. Crimson underbrush made the colour riotous. But we had no time to ponder over the pathos of nature or over the sublimity of the season. We had travelled a long way to make pictures of this scene and the time available was woefully limited. Feverishly I set my palette and sat down to paint. Bill hurried around taking photographs. We secured adequate records in short order-not finished records for there was much work yet to be done in darkroom and studio. But we were ready to go at the moment appointed by the pilot.

The return was a repetition of the struggle we had already experienced, with the distinction that we were now distinctly weary. Towards the end my legs almost refused to lift over the deadfalls. On the way we noticed a party of Indians in a canoe. They had made the portage whilst we were at the falls. They laboured at their paddles. If their destination was the same as ours they would still be labouring at the end of the week. We expected to be home in time for dinner. And we were. A striking example, we thought as Pilot Eddy taxied his Fairchild towards the shelving rock, of the defeat of the distance and difficulty of the northern trail....

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS: RAINBOW FALLS [“I Lake Waterfalls,” 8-10.]

Rainbow Falls is on the Whiteshell River, which is a tributary of the Winnipeg River, and joins it only a few miles west of Boundary Falls. The latter river abounds in waterfalls, though none of them is impressive in height and most have the character of rapids. I had seen them all from the air-each appeared to be a mere strip of foam-and I had paid each of them a visit on foot, excepting Silver Falls, which, I was informed, was the best. So we went one day in the fall, a brave day full of sunshine.

We followed the restless river many miles and at length turned at the signpost into a rough mud track, an embryonic road on which men were working. For half a mile we meandered through poplar woods, indescribably beautiful, becoming more conscious as we progressed of the roar of turbulent water. Parking the car where the track ended, we walked down a slight declivity and on to bare rock. The view was still mostly hidden by hummocks of rock and groves of pine; indeed it was not until we reached the river's brink that its full grandeur became apparent.

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The first impression was one of excitement and awe. The fact that this wild tumultousness succeeded the tranquility of the forest no doubt heightened that impression. A haze of smoke enveloped the distance in a mantle of mystery... so that the dimensions of the river seemed to be magnified. The haze also created an alluring but somewhat weird effect of colour.

We stood at the foot of the rapids and looked upstream. The waters piled high on the skyline in protean, foam-laced waves, that rose and fell, and surged forward with terrific momentum. The dark rock around us was battered by white waters that extended as far as the eye could see.

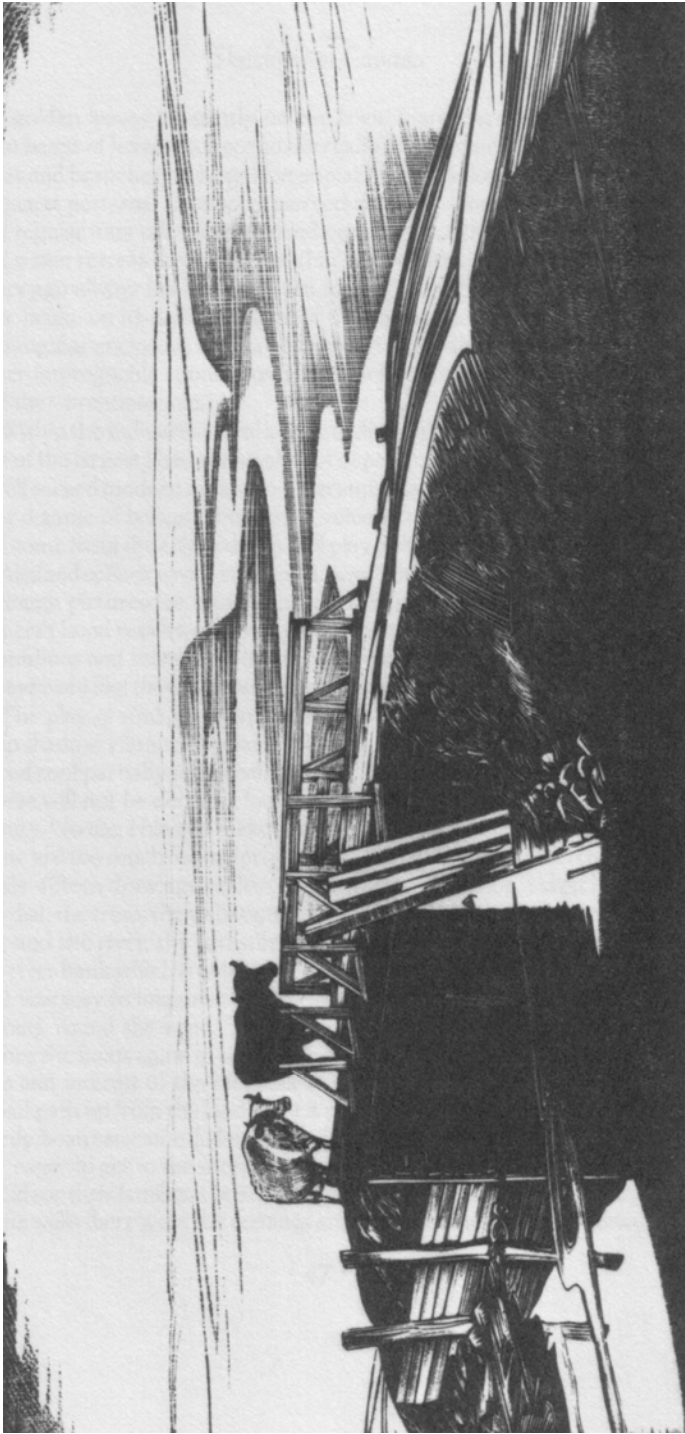
Foam clothed the great waves like a shawl of lace; the rays of the low sun tintured it with rose as faint and delicate as the blush on a white petal and gilded the western facets of the granite walls. The body of water thrown against the light was tawny, and dark gray in its inscrutable depths. The effect of colour was of transcendent beauty and the turmoil was terrifying. The impact of such a scene on the mind of a sketcher results in excitement. We ran from one point of vantage to another seeking the arrangement which seemed most characteristic and paintable. My companion chose a spot where the waves threatened to engulf her. My own, also at the water's edge was more secure. We set up our stools and laid out our materials in frenzied haste, fearful of wasting time that seemed so precious. We felt humble and inept faced with a scene of such magnitude.

The light was steady, the granite immutable, but the water! Rushing at giddy speed, eddying at the brink, churning, rolling, crashing, exploding in spray, not only against rock but in mid-channel where currents converged, tumbling, convulsed, boiling in constant ferment. A "still" camera could never render such chaotic movement-the result would be frozen inertia no matter how fast the lens might be. The painter can suggest it, but he needs time to study his subject, to analyze, and simplify in the light of his analysis, all its complications. Our sketches were summary; they had to be made in thirty minutes, and, therefore, I shall not be happy until I return.

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS: LOWER FORT GARRY

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated.]

One warm still autumn day I found myself a willing prisoner within a stone fort. I sat on a chair in the broad shade of a tree and watched the golden leaves fall



Cook's Creek, 1932, Wood engraving, 11.5 x 23.6 cm,
The Winnipeg Art Gallery.

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gently on the lawn. Gardeners raked together little heaps of leaves, but not so hurriedly as to disturb the peace. The holes and branches of the golden poplars were shadowed upon the wall in quaint patterns. Loopholes pierced the thick limestone at frequent and regular intervals, and reminded one that once this was a stronghold and a safe retreat. In reality this that the builders wrought a hundred years ago always has been a haven of rest. Neither bullets nor arrows ever broke on its defences. One of the bastions at the corners of the rectangular enclosure was indeed used as a powder magazine, but the other impregnable roundhouses were utilized by the cook, the sutler, and the warehouseman.

Within the walls are several large buildings, all of stone. On the verandah of the largest I had my lunch-not of pemmican or buffalo steak, but a well served modern meal. Now a group of ladies is seriously occupied over a game of bridge. I hear their voices. Later in the afternoon men will come from the city and they will play golf on the links behind.

Alexander Ross wrote in 1856, "Lower Fort Garry is more secluded; although picturesque, and full of rural beauty. Here the Governor of Rupert's Land resides, when he passes any time in the colony. To those of studious and retired habit it is preferred to the Upper Fort." It has always been like that, I know, perfectly peaceful.

The play of sunlight is amusement enough for a lazy man, but the deep shadow, vibrant, dramatic, which extends to the bastion itself with its red roof partially screened by vivid foliage, and the rich green sward -these will not be denied. I look again, unwilling to be moved even by beauty. No use. I have to make a sketch; the pictorial possibilities of the scene are too much for my professional eye. Afterwards I sketched furiously-fifteen drawings, no less, on that sunny afternoon. I sketched the sun dial, the trees, the walls outside and in, the doorways, the boat landing, and the river, the turnstile-everything. Then I smoked a pipe on the river bank which is only a few yards from the outer wall.

It was easy to imagine the fast canoes or the brigades of York boats coming round the bend. They say you could hear the crews singing before the boats came in sight. I could imagine that too, and the eager-ness and interest of the nice folk at the fort as they waited. I saw the broad path up from the landing; it is not obliterated yet. Here along the sturdy boatmen came, laden with bales of merchandise, laughing, shouting, eager to get to the shop to be paid off and be free to attend to their friends or their families. Or in winter, when the snow drifted to the height of the walls there were the comings and goings of the dog trains-drivers resplendent in blanket coats and gay sashes,

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huskies bedecked with ribbons and bells. It is cold; but within doors huge fires of oak create an atmosphere of cheer and warmth and the long evenings are spent sociably in conversation or when the fiddler sets his chair on the table in the rollicking activity of the Red River jig.

The fort is not essentially a relic of the past, nor is it only a house of memory. Rather it is an expression in stone of the continuity of line, its easy flow, its imperceptible transitions. The mason who laid these courses lived until 1898, not so long ago it seems to some of us.

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS: LAKE WINNIPEG

[“Wet Paint,” 108-9,iii.]

The sketcher discovers sooner or later that virgin country or the forest primeval, considered merely as landscape, does not stimulate the imagination so certainly as that in which the hand of man is apparent. The wilderness is unfriendly, in pictorial art as well as in fact. A... landscape without a wisp of smoke above the trees, a footprint in the sand, is no less welcome when a man is lost therein and lonely, than in art, when he comes to buy paintings....²

I once spent a week on the steamboat *Wolverine*, which plies to and fro on Lake Winnipeg. We reached the northern extremity of the lake and stayed for a few minutes at Norway House. The journey revealed a sketching ground of some value. The scenery is neither bold nor exceptional; some indeed would say that there is none. It is man's activities that provide real interest on that lake—all that pertains to the fishing industry, wharves, boats, and fish-houses. On the Red River, where the voyage begins, are many crazy craft, that in colour and line, have greater pictorial value than the scenic background, although the marshes at the mouth are interesting. On the lake itself only the sky is a delight, and the gulls that pose all day. The occasional island or shore line that comes into view is a change, mildly engaging, but not pictorial, but the places of call are actually exciting. Whenever we roped to the home-made wharf I spent my time making quick drawings in pencil of buildings, of figures and boats. On the water I sketched the gulls and terns that followed the steamboat so hopefully.

The approach to Berens River is by devious ways, amongst a number of shoals and bare rocks just awash, eventually by bigger rocks and

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wooded islands. There are fish-houses, shacks, and tents on some of them, and you hear the inevitable clamour of huskies.

The whitewashed fish-houses with their black roofs seem at this distance most memorable-wonderful congeries of logs, planks, and shingles, piled up, added to, and propped and buttressed ingeniously. There are fishing boats moored near them and modest-dwellings on the adjacent beaches. The wharf, when the *Wolverine* comes in, is littered with Indians and their women, all brightly apparelled.

This northern route was taken by picturesque brigades of York boats-big open boats propelled by sweeps when the wind was insufficient to fill the square blanket sail. There are none left now. The last lay rotting on the banks of the Nelson; the sturdy frame that withstood the shocks of a passage of the rapids a thousand times, now yielding to the action of the weather. Although this trip was more restful than interesting, it was always annoying to be spirited away from a paintable subject after fifteen or thirty minutes. There never was time for anything but pencil notes, for as soon as the legitimate duties of the boat were performed, after supplies had been dumped and boxes of whitefish for the New York market loaded, we were away.

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS: PORCUPINE, ONTARIO

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, November 16, 1940.]

The gold mining industry, in spite of its economic importance, and its visually interesting monuments and processes, lacks a graphic interpreter among the artists of Canada. For that reason little persuasion was needed to induce me to make a trip to the Porcupine district in Northern Ontario.

We drove from Toronto, and had made 300 miles or so before we saw any evidence of mining. Then we snaked through the almost abandoned town of Cobalt, which hummed with activity when I was a youth. It is a shack town, thrown up untidily amongst tumbled hills. Few if any of the streets are level. It is picturesque and bedraggled and suggested the pathos of age and decay.

I believe certain venturesome Toronto artists have painted pictures of these shacks, over the caption Northern Mining town. The Porcupine is almost 200 miles further north and its towns arouse no sentiment of pity for fallen glory. They are fully modern and tremendously active.

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A few miles beyond Matheson the first head-frames appeared, topping the tall spruce of the forest. There is a certain similarity between them and the prairie elevator. They were designed for utility only and any beauty they do possess is adventitious. Paint is applied for protection and not for adornment, although appearance does at times soften the heart of the mine manager. Naybob, I noticed, is done in white and the roofs and doors are embellished with apple green....

The average miner is a splendid specimen physically: erect, muscular, independent. The bowed body and cowed demeanor of Andre Bieler's labourers are conspicuously absent. They would be grand models. I visualized many pictures of miners at work and I should like to paint them, but I shall not paint myself painfully climbing a 100 foot slope, which was, here and there, almost too narrow to squeeze through.

The homes at which I was entertained upon the Porcupine, were as modern and comfortable as city homes. All had good pictures on the walls. I came across Franz Johnston's work frequently, and once I thrilled to see a large view of Qu'Appelle valley by James Henderson.

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS: THE LAURENTIAN SHIELD

[The *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated.]

It was a fine sunny morning following an early shower; the fresh wind was charged with the scent of sweet clover. We were driving to Penniac Bay and I took in all the sights on the way since the demands on my conversational powers were not too exacting.

I saw a large field of stubble, bronze against the sun; stocks of grain well-defined in the strong light; and St. Andrew's Church in the distance. In the middle-distance was a threshing outfit, and near at hand some men were loading the stocks. An engaging and colourful scene-particularly that noble group in the foreground.....

By-and-by we came to the land of rock, water, and pine-the Laurentian Shield. We passed through a wilderness of bare rock and dead or dying trees. Here and there a camp of berry-pickers gave mute evidence that the country is not quite so useless as it seemed. Much of the timber had been jack-pine, a weak and stunted growth.

Of all our trees the jack-pine is most lacking in grace. It is by nature awkward and angular; its cones, like warts, seem to be distributed arbitrarily along its limbs; foliage adds little if anything to its appearance,

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being mangy in effect. Regarded in the light of Ruskin's eulogium on the genus—"Goodly and solemn pines with trunks like pillars of temples and the purple burning of their branches sheathed in deep globes of cloudy green"—the jack-pine makes you laugh.

Yet there is something intriguing about it. I look at every individual specimen hoping to find some chance bizarrerie, some oddity in shape, or that occasional elegance that comes from sweeps of associated curves, from agreeably disposed branching.

The most famous Canadian painting, Tom Thomson's "The Jack Pine," derives much of its charm from the eccentric pattern of the tree. Hopefully as we drove, I glanced at the close ranks of miserable, starved skeletons, fit for nothing but firewood, each an offence to the eye, a reproach to the land, but twice I stopped and took photographs of jack-pines with thrilling lines. Here and there patches of firewood clothed the earth—a joyous glow of fine colour whether associated with charred stumps or with hillocks of clean granite.

As we rolled down the hill to Penniac Bay a wide reach of the lake was spread out before us. The wind, still fresh, disturbed the blue water. The pine-clad hills of the further shore were of that indescribable mixture of blue, blue-green, and rose, characteristic of all shores in this region. The road skirted the bay and climbed out of sight behind a hill. This, we thought, was the most refreshing scene on the road—clear water, clean air, and bright sunshine—or it may have been the day.

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS: LAKE OF THE WOODS [“Wet Paint”, 86-7.]

Our cottage at Lake of the Woods is built upon a rock, a rounded mass of granite jutting out into the lake and bare of vegetation save for a grove of young jackpines and a wild cherry tree or two. The verandah faces the sunrise, the sunset, and the northern sky and the back door opens onto the forest. There is a miniature cove with a sandy bottom and a ramshackle boat-house beside it. We spent the summer months here, and each night were lulled to sleep by the soothing night-cadences of the waters and the woods.

The village is two miles away over the water but there are other cottages within call and numerous islands in the bay. Every day brings new adventure, whether we set out in the canoe on a short excursion, or in the launch for a

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long one. The map pinned on the wall is a tantalizing document, as most maps are, and if there is any sense in nomenclature, the adjacent lakes and the streams spread out upon it are alluring to the last degree. One canoe route leads from Clearwater Bay through Granite Lake, the Lake of Two Mountains, Moose, Bear Mountain, Crow, Duck and Rush Lakes, back to the starting point. Desirable places; who would not wish to see them?

More than one landscape painter has confessed that the lake is uninteresting. It is true that the country around is distressingly flat, almost as flat as the water, though on a higher plane. Yet beauty is every-where apparent. The lake does possess a wealth of interesting detail that appeals with an intimacy which makes every object a possible shrine of beauty. There are the trees. The jack-pine, though a shapeless thing, disposing its drooping branches in grotesque but graceful curves. The birch, whose opalescent bole reflects the colours of surrounding things. The poplar, with twisted branching, delightfully capricious, and dancing leaves-a medley of dark green discs, spinning golden guineas, oval mirrors the colour of the sky, and, when the light shines through, instead of upon or athwart them, golden green. The pines with wheel-shaped bunches of dark-green needles making a splendid foil for the rest.

There is the water-rivers and rapids, modest falls, gently rippling water whose elusive forms are difficult to follow. I know a dream river, created for canoes and landscape painters. Trees overshadow it, and water-lilies bloom below its banks. It is clear and deep and narrow. No wind disturbs its serenity. All the way up one hears the rising music of its falls, and eventually one's eyes are blessed by the sight of them.

There are the islands, and there is the open sky, which is more beautiful than the dweller in the mountains imagines....

On first acquaintance with the lake the artist starts with a conventional landscape, with his horizon a third of the way up or down the panel, a tree in full stature about a third of the way across; reflected in the water, and a foreground of rock and vegetation. His next sketch differs to the extent of two trees instead of one. By-and-by he moves his horizon, later he leaves it out altogether. He learns to amputate his trees, showing perhaps only their crowns, with flying clouds behind, or only the roots sprawling grotesquely in a litter of brown pine-needles On open water the reflections of the sky on the nearer ripples are a fascinating study. Sometimes clouds appear upon it, as a multitude of small ovals, enveloping others of different colour or tone, in form much resembling the concentricities of a cut agate. They appear and vanish in a flash, and

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dance with an abandon that inspires all beholders. There is the sheen of the sun on the ripples-countless images of the sun that dazzle and glitter-with a blinding brilliance impossible to reproduce with pigments....

The evening sky over the end of the bay is laced with the wisps of golden cloud that Turner loved to paint. The moon is low on the horizon. We are between the sun and the moon, and this is the golden hour. The suffusion of golden light creates soft harmonies and in a measure mitigates the chromatic crimes our neighbours have committed on their boat-houses. The shadows are cool and enhance the brilliance of the light. The wispy clouds deepened to crimson as we sat. A fine sunset. It is often remarked that sunsets are rarely painted, although artists must be aware that such are the only phenomena observed by the average man, save the earthquake and the blizzard. A crimson sky is hard to ignore. It is lovely, considered in relation with the whole vault of the heavens, and the visible earth, but crude and strident in itself, without context. Generally the eastern sky discloses a subtler beauty which one often is too preoccupied to see.

Here at the Lake of the Woods majestic cumulus clouds often rise in the eastern skies in the evening. Tinted by the sun, they reflect its last rays-gold, orange, red and at the last a ghostly gray in the night. The limpid shadows that reveal its contours-the clean edges of its upper parts-the mystery of its vanishment at the horizon-the thought that its magnificence inspires-why, with this object of splendour in the heavens, who would look at a sunset?

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS: THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

[“Wet Paint,” pp. 93,96-7; *The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 26 July 1930;
“Painting in the Rockies,” *Canadian Forum*, 31 (Oct. 1951) 158-9.]

Canadian landscape painters have penetrated the most remote parts of the Dominion, even to the extreme north, within the Arctic Circle. Few have been able to resist the lure of the gaunt Rockies; indeed, an army of painters from other lands labours under the same spell.

The character of Rocky Mountain scenery is virtually the same at all the best known resorts and the questions of accessibility and comfort are all that need to be considered by the painter when he selects a base of operations. There is beauty everywhere-austere and noble on the higher levels; pretty in the valleys.

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The valley in which Banff nestles, and the lower slopes of the surrounding mountains, are well-covered with lodge-pole pine, a very straight and slender tree as the name implies, and so dense in growth that one wonders how elk with their great spread of antlers, or moose, manage to find a passage through them. Willows and poplars grow in the valley too, and Douglas firs dot the slopes. But all have green leaves; the shrubs and the grass beneath them are green, and the reeds under the river banks and on the lakes afford no relief to the eye. When Edward Bawden, the English painter, came to Banff to lecture at the School of Fine Arts, he confessed that he was appalled at the number of trees, mostly of one kind, and apparently inescapable. Trees, trees, he said, nothing but trees. I don't know whether the trees, as such, or the boles, or the foliage, annoyed him most, but the prevailing green in a summer landscape is generally oppressive to the spirit of the artist. He looks for relief to the heights above the trees, the region of bare rock, water, snow and ice. These heights are easily reached; and, be it said, only in the mountains can he paint snow pictures comfortably in his shirt sleeves.

A fifty-mile drive, mostly through forest, brings him to Moraine Lake, a green lake of a most improbable brilliance. But he does not turn his back on it immediately. He takes the trail along the shore nearly to the end and strikes up through the trees to the right. After a mile, the trees begin to thin out and by-and-by he is walking through a meadow jewelled with flowers and sparsely grown with Lyall's larch-which become smaller and finally give up the struggle for life, as he gains altitude. At that point he is within sight of a small lake reflecting a huge snowbank, above which is ice-bound Wenkchemna Pass. Ten towering peaks are with him along that gently ascending trail, the scree, in fact, only a few yards away, and on the other side of that valley the tops of great mountains appear.

There are other easier ways of circumventing the indigestible greens. There are rock formations lower down that suggest paintable patterns devoid of verdure, wild flowers that grace even a green field and there is the waterfall. From any point of view the waterfall is one of nature's more dramatic aspects, a flash of force irresistible. Rock, that synonym for permanence, bombarded by fragments of its own substance, carried by the stream and partaking of its violence, cannot withstand the attack. The two elements are models of diversity. The artist senses the sharp contrast involved, solidity with volatility, immobility with a vagrant flow, but regards them objectively as opposed masses of black and white, related by interchange-white on black (water spread like fine lace over black rock, or rock stippled with protean patterns of spray),

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and black on white (rock thrust through a welter of foam). He sees interchange also in the reflection of shining water on the underside of overhanging rock.

Although essentially a simple achromatic arrangement, the colour of the falling water is subtle and satisfying. Sometimes a rainbow shines through the mist. Even without it the grays seen in white water are often faintly suffused with pink, violet, green and yellow. Streams fed by glaciers seem to have a delicate green pigment in solution, and waterfalls in such streams are very colourful....

On my first visit I rested, after a long tramp, at the spot where Sargent set up his easel to paint his famous *Lake O'Hara*.³ It was a gorgeous scene—the green lake with pines at its edges, steep walls of rock surrounding it, all in a glamorous twilight, while immediately in front, but stupendously high, a great glacier gleamed in warm light. We camped near the further extremity of the lake, beside a noisy stream....

On one occasion the latter scene impressed me most profoundly. It was late in the evening and the blue peak soared in a sky of citron. The lower tones, representing crevices and depressions, or trees on the lower slopes, were an intenser blue. Near at hand a forest of spruce; a black silhouette, skirted the shores of the lake which held a jade green image of all. The whole scene was in distinct flat tones, all its details obscured in the fading light.

We had some argument as to the best means to adopt, whether to camp in one spot, to wander, or to submit to hotel meal-hours. We decided to camp and looked forward to an uninterrupted orgy of sketching, carefree, comfortably untidy, paint-slinging furiously from dawn to dewy eye. The reality proved very different. We would awaken shivering very, very early, look out on a gray, damp world, and slink quietly back to the comfort of the blankets. When at last we rose, we tried to light a fire in the rain-succeeded-breakfasted by eleven-washed the dishes-assumed our packs-and climbed the nearly perpendicular mountain behind the tent in an effort to achieve a wider outlook above the trees. It was a stiff climb, but nature had placed gooseberry bushes at points where you felt that something to grasp was essential, and there was often water below to soften the impact of a fall. When, after a prodigious effort, we reached the meadow at the foot of the Opabin glacier, it began to snow. That happened more than once, but we were often up early, in a mood to appreciate beauty of every kind. The sun shone, marmots whistled, rock-rabbits squeaked, bees droned; there was an occasional rumble of rocks falling from the heights, and an ever-present roar of rushing water in which it

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was easy to imagine voices. The air was heavy with the smell of marigolds. There were delightful views on that plateau without number. Mountain and meadow were at variance, the latter indescribably warm in tone, golden and dappled with flowers, mountains were invariably cool. Streams, broad and quiet in one place, rushing noisily over a declivity in another—a string of lakes and cascades, and tumbled rocks, and stunted larch that were then yellow, gave infinite interest and variety to the foregrounds. The debris from broken bastions formed screens that trespassed on the edges of the meadow, and above them rose mighty walls of rock. The plateau was some miles long, and was bounded at the northern end by an immense glacier that seemed to flow from a V-shaped break in the mountain range—the Opabin pass.

Mountains are always changing. One artist may respond to the effect of brilliant sunshine in clear weather; another may see beauty in the vari-hued strata of which the earth's crust is composed, and produce mountain sides resembling a cut of streaky bacon, while a third prefers the soft effects of rain, smoke, or mist, which affords them the opportunity of rendering peaks as easily manipulated silhouettes of blue or gray. We had no choice; we became automatically artists of the third class. We rarely saw the sun, and bacon dominated our diet so completely that we felt we were under no obligation to paint it too.

Sometimes the air cleared of the smoke of forest fires; the mountains seemed appreciably near; the heights of Victoria, which towered above our camp, lost a little of the mystery with which the prevalent haze had invested them. Their colour was still delicate, purer if possible, and the subtle range of tones within their contours was preserved and even amplified. The constant rain that poured upon us suggests it would be most fitting to discourse on the glory of gray in the heights, on diffused opalescent light filtering through clouds, on the subdued harmonies created by contiguous colours, which under other conditions, would be garish and disturbing. What could be more picturesque than a troop of trail-riders, gaily caparisoned with coloured caps, vivid scarves, and rainbow blankets, all in a sombre setting of gray? But of gray itself we found it difficult to wax enthusiastic—in a tent we were too conscious of its concomitant discomfort, dampness and cold. Even the local bear looked forlorn, and in a mood which, in us, would be designated by the name he bears. The waters alone seemed to retain their boisterous spirits, rushing alongside the camp with a noise like wind through the forest, and pouring persistently from the sky in an anxious effort to leave those

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frigid heights, and seek the lower levels as speedily as may be—a laudable object it seemed to us.

Beauty, pleasure, and the good things of life are intensified, and perhaps only exist, by reason of contrast. When a stray of sunshine appeared our woes diminished and we recognized a source of warmth more potent physically than the fires of artistic enthusiasm. We would cheerfully take the steep trail again that leads to Lake Oesa, past smaller lakes and entrancing falls. It is wiser to stay by the bungalow camps if you want to paint in the mountains, avoiding the chores and the discomforts of camp, and ensuring as far as possible, the receptive mood, untroubled mind and fresh body that make good painting possible.

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS: SKETCHING ON THE WEST COAST

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated]

In order to make the best use of his time the landscape painter finds it necessary to spend the first day or two in exploring the possibilities of a new sketching ground before starting to paint. Thus he locates all the scenes that appeal to him and discovers what light suits each one best, whether morning or evening, sunshine or the diffused light or a gray day. Accordingly we hired a thirty-foot gas boat, the *Ludo*, and set forth with that laudable object in view.

Within this pleasant harbour on the Pacific coast one's outlook is somewhat restricted. High, wooded hills surround it. One sees across the little bays and to the further shore, but the open sea and the snow-capped mountains of the coast range are invisible. I wanted to see the mountains. It was suggested that I should climb one of the encompassing hills. A mere thousand feet—but what a task for a sybarite! They are precipitous and the forest covers them; they offer a footing of dead-falls, tangled salal, and rocks. There are few trails here: everyone goes everywhere by boat.

We therefore pulled out of the harbour and made for Jarvis Inlet. The mountains came into view early—a fine range of peaks dominated by Mount Diadem, a splendid black fang topped with snow, and we anchored in the lee of a rocky point. But for the misadventure of a missing kettle everything happened satisfactorily as arranged; the sketch, the lunch; even the wind diminished, leaving a calmer sea.

At one point on the way back an extensive lake drains into the sea; the considerable stream flows through a gorge. Here two of us elected

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to land in order to see the lake and to visit a friend who lives remotely on the southern shore, and writes in the intervals between hauling wood, packing stores over a mountain trail, and washing dishes.

We crawled out of the dinghy and found a precarious foothold on the slimy, or alternatively, barnacled boulders on the beach under a cliff. By the time we had progressed painfully a few yards the *Ludo* was out of sight behind the headland. There was no sign of the trail which, we were informed, did exist; indeed, there was no room for one on our side of the gorge; the cliff rose sheer from the rockfall. It must be on the other side, we said, and accordingly we forded the fast-running stream at a likely spot.

Soon we were walking on a smooth forest path through the ravine, which, but for the fact that it was infested with snakes, was a pleasant one. Bleeding-heart, violets, and lady-slippers bloomed in profusion, and when we lifted our heads dog-wood blossoms shone high in white brilliance against the dark green of the conifers. Salmon-berry, currant, hawthorn, cherry, plum, and other wild fruit flowers illuminated the intermediate spaces. But mostly our eyes were on the trail, and we kicked snakes out of our way. The ravine widened and shortly the path led us along an immense fallen tree and ended abruptly in the lake, fifty feet from the shore. Tied to the end was an Indian dugout nearly full of water. Across the lake, five-hundred yards away, was our friend's cottage, dwarfed by the height of the forest-clad mountains.

We bellowed, howled, shouted, and cooed for some time, expecting a boat to put out and pick us off the end of that log. We took our shoes and stockings off and laid them on the log to dry. We smoked and continued to halloo at intervals. Then reluctantly we began to bail the water out of the dug-out, which, from any point of view, was a mean, frail, craft, and eventually we paddled ourselves across to the cottage, to find our hosts finishing their lunch in the kitchen entirely oblivious of the racket we had been making.

The lake, called Sakinaw, is an entrancing one, dotted with islands, surrounded by virgin forest and steep mountains, and stocked with trout. We rested, borrowed dry stockings, and resumed our hike, which, from this point was along a well-made trail, through bush, until the end.

We covered that day a good deal of the country and since then we have climbed one of the mountains (when we trod on yellow musk, and where the arbutus was in full flower), and have penetrated most of the bays and passages within the harbour, so that now at last, when I am ready to go, I feel competent to plan an admirable and productive scheme

for sketching in this neighborhood. I have acquired a lot of knowledge but only a small parcel of sketches.

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS:
AN OASIS IN A DESERT

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated.]

My companions in the launch were not particularly early risers and when I heard we must leave Greenway Sound at seven in the morning in order to reach the head of the inlet, and catch the tide at Kingcome, I had grave doubts about breakfast. But I was up early and sat in the pilot house with the boatman, hungry but interested, whilst we churned the long waters of the Pacific. We seemed alone in the world. Once we sighted a small boat and towards the end we passed a fresh scar on the mountain side where an avalanche had swept soil and forest clean into the sea. A stream sprawled down over the black rock, making a pattern like fine lace. There was a thriving community here, and a large wharf, but many of the shacks were demolished.

The terrific blast caused by the rushing mass of snow and ice wrought destruction also, stripping trees to the bole and finally felling them in orderly rows, lifting masses of cast iron into the sea, and, in one extraordinary instance, blowing a launch so completely away that no part of it was even seen again except the engine which stayed where it was on the beach.

Otherwise these vast expanses might well have been unpeopled. We saw no other trace of humanity. Mountains entirely wooded, save only the precipices which afforded no hold for a tree and the shorn path of a snowslide, meet the sea steeply. So steep indeed that the whole inlet offers no anchorage for a boat. There are no shelving beaches, no gentle slopes whereon a village might be built. The view ahead and astern consisted of the narrow channel and a succession of mighty snow-capped headlands seeming to meet in the distance.

By-and-by the aroma of frying bacon disputed the smell of hot oil which arose from the Diesel engine, and by the time we had finished breakfast we were near the head of the inlet. A deep valley—the valley of Kingcome river—opened up to the north and appeared to be fertile as well as lovely. About a mile in width, it is level with river silt. The outer flats are covered with coarse grass and are bare of trees which made the uncouth monument which arose before us all the more startling and incongruous.

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This “monstrum horrendum” is a single nude figure carved from a huge cedar log, of which the lower portion serves as a pedestal. The arms are raised towards heaven, the grotesque and grinning face is turned towards the sea. Not a nice sight for a nervous man....

About two miles up the winding river we tied up at Halliday’s wharf-a boom-log-and there we stayed for twenty-four hours.⁴ It was a golden afternoon. I made a sketch looking up the valley. In the far distance was a high white mountain, unnamed and unknown except locally. An old Indian brought his slender dug-out skillfully along-side the landing. He had that day shot two cougars and required Halliday to mark the skins for bounty, which was done by cutting out a tiny square in the ear. He came from the village further upstream and out of sight-a remote village where, if anywhere, the old customs survive, the famous dances may still be seen, and it is possible that some dead may yet be perched in neighboring trees confined in decorated boxes.

But the most remarkable and romantic feature of the place to me is Halliday’s farm-a cultured precinct in a wilderness, like an oasis in a desert; a well-stocked, clean, and productive farm. The nearest source of supply is Alert Bay, 56 miles distant. Halliday actually rowed there in the early days whenever it was necessary. The location is of rare beauty. Houses and barns are built among the trees at the foot of the mountain. There is a waterfall a few yards away, a musical, friendly fall. Looking across the river one faces a cleft in the mountain well through which is seen a wide area of perpetual snow. Like most pioneers, the Hallidays’ first home was a log-cabin. The present house is “fully modern”....

CANADIAN SKETCHING GROUNDS: THREE WEST COAST VILLAGES

[The *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated; “Wet Paint,” pp, 101, 103, 106.]

I am on the British Columbia coast for a definite purpose I am here on a sketching trip, that is, to gather material for possible easel pictures, dignified or otherwise. Time and place are in the happiest conjunction although when I left Winnipeg, snow lay on the ground, in Alert Bay spring flowers have been blooming for a week or two. Many leaf-buds have burst and the air is balmy. The heavy overcoat in which I travelled has become an unseasonable burden.

This picturesque town is built virtually on the beach on the leeward side of the heavily wooded island called Cormorant. The road-there is but one-is barely

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out of reach of the waves at high tide. The house in which I stay is almost at the end of the road and near the eastern tip of the island. From the pebbled beach, upon which trees and logs have been cast by the sea, one looks down Johnstone Strait-the busy seaway to Vancouver, flanked by a multitude of headlands receding into the blue distance forever changing colour and shape with the mood of the weather The mission hospital adjoins the graveyard and one passes various dwellings and the offices of the telephone and the police before reaching the cannery which is an institution of some importance, around which, indeed, the town was built. Beyond the cannery is the Indian quarter, a compages of community houses in various stages of disrepair, shacks and a few family totems....

On the whole the display of native art at Alert Bay was disappointing. We determined to explore the more remote Indian winter villages marked on the chart and any others we might hear of. To that end my brother overhauled the *Anne*, provisioned her, and we weighed anchor one fine morning.

The *Anne* is equipped with a small gasoline engine; she has a cabin amidships, which is kitchen, engine-room, lounge, and bedroom, according to the time of day. I slept on deck under an awning, most comfortably, Owing to our lack of power we were obliged to study the tides, but by evening the same day we arrived at the village of Tsatsisnukomi, in whose bay we lay. The crescent beach was fringed with a single row of buildings, mostly weathered gray, and comprising community houses, both habitable and derelict, and a hill clothed by the forest rose steeply behind. A fine canoe with a painted prow lay on the beach. The only totems visible were within a dismantled community-house and served as supports for the mighty rafters. There were other supports too-stout, round, fluted pillars of wood that recalled the columns of a ruined temple in the fading light. The totems were obviously family crests and as such were far more interesting than many of the heraldic devices issued by the College of Heralds. The place was entirely deserted save by an army of large and loathesome slugs and the ghosts of dead Indians. A damp and eerie spot. Nettles grew to an unusual height about the buildings.

We stayed a while the next day, until wind made the anchorage uncomfortable, but I had time to make pencil drawings of some of the more grotesque carvings and a water-colour of the beach and part of the village with two house-posts in the foreground, each representing a bear suckling a wolf. A little more than an hour's sailing across the channel brought us close to the

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sheltered bay around which the village of Mamalilicoola is spread. But it is a shallow bay, only navigable at high tide-it was then a vast reach of mud-and the best we could do was to anchor in an adjacent bay out of sight.

We had passed several small islands that were used as burial grounds. The monuments to the dead were often imposing-close at hand and enveloped in mist as we saw them on one occasion, they were almost alarming. Enormous fish painted in black and white on long planks of wood cut to the shape were attached to upright supports like a modern billboard, though, as I have suggested, of heroic proportions.

The surroundings of Mamalilicoola are beautiful, and the village itself, larger than the other as we saw it from the sea, was strongly attractive. I was anxious to walk its single street. The bay in which we lay was secluded. The shore was obscured by a dense forest which limited our view. On the chance that there was a trail within it leading to the village we rowed to the head of the bay in the dinghy and stepped ashore. There was indeed an old blazed trail and a walk of a mile or more in a green twilight brought us to our objective. We entered a strange world as we emerged from a mass of head-high nettles on the sward immediately beneath a tall and magnificent totem-pole. It stood in front of a community house, the pediment of whose facade was carved and painted with an allegorical figure of the sun, flanked by two fishes. As we turned to the sea we looked down upon a crescent beach, gleaming white with broken clam shells. A long and sinuous pier of floating logs indicated a good deal of canoe traffic. As we looked, a black canoe, with a white prow and an emerald green gunwhale, glided silently alongside it, a squaw stepped out and shouldered an enormous bundle; her lord preceding her with a paddle. Half a mile seaward were the islands of the dead and beyond them rose wooded heights of larger islands, the snow-capped peaks of Vancouver Island playing hide and seek in the clouds and towering above them.

We walked along the neat pathway between the houses and the beaches and passed a number of totems, house-posts, and zunuks (joymen-grotesque and humorous single figures, formerly used at potlatches or other celebrations). Several of the zunuks wore tall hats, reminiscent of those affected by the early Jesuit missionaries. One, fallen from his high estate (they are usually elevated on poles) and legless, served as a post to hold a family clothes line. A few women and old men, useless for fishing, remained in the village and were friendly enough.

I found material for several days sketching: the outlook across the bay, with interesting foregrounds, views along the street, and from the beach.

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Clouds were at once the delight and the bane of the cruise. Their restlessness now disclosed unsuspected distances, now obliterated them wholly or in part, thus shifting the scene every few moments. The humidity of the air produced wonderful tones of blue in every background and a range of soft harmonies which never occur in the mountains or on the prairies. As pure landscape it is the finest I have been privileged to see.

We found another village-Karlukwees-more interesting than the others. The clean white beach had borrowed its shape from the new moon. Here the chief's house-a very civilized little house, such as you see in any Canadian town-was flanked by two incongruous forbidding figures, each carrying a keg upon his shoulder. What exactly was their significance I could not imagine. The path was paved with enormous cedar planks which must have measured five feet across. They had been split from the log with wedges and trimmed with an adze. The cedar was indispensable to the Coast Indian, as the coco-palm is to the Polynesian, the date-palm to the Arab, and the canoe-birch to the Indian of the prairie. He hollowed the log by burning and shaped the ends to make his canoe; he split it with wedges to make great beams, planks, and the smaller shakes for building, literally sewing them together with pliable branches from the same tree. The bark served for fuel; its inner fibres for basket weaving, and its pigmentation for a dye.

Karlukwees provided many subjects for painting. In fact, never have I seen a more delectable sketching ground. We had penetrated an arm of the sea, the open sea seemed far away, for it flowed only in narrow channels, between an immense number of islands. I regretted leaving the coast and I long to return.



3



CANADIAN ART

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 6 June 1936; *The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated; *The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 4 August, 1934; "Art in Manitoba," *Saturday Night*, 9 April 1938, p. 16.]

ROGER FRY'S BOLD ASSERTION that all art is communal may seem literally equivocal, even nonsensical, but it is true. Art is the expression of the spirit of the community. Art cannot flourish by the sole effort of the artist; cannot exist without a "gallery". There would be no reason in proving pictures for the blind or music for the deaf or drama for the deaf and blind. Art is truly one of the amenities of communal life; at its best it is inspired by the people. Thus foreign art cannot be completely satisfying; it is a makeshift: though admirable in its own environment, it is less admirable in another and no more adaptable than an alien tongue or exotic manners. For its ultimate benefit, a nation must encourage its own artists....

The term national art, as applied to painting, implies some unique feature which is readily identified and which is evident in the types portrayed and in their costumes, as well as in the method and style of production, and in the character of the landscape settings. Thus to the layman Chinese art is unmistakably Chinese, and it is possible to confuse it only with the art of Japan, which is a variant; sixteenth century Dutch art, Persian art, and that of a dozen other nations bears intrinsic evidence of its origin. Now that the nations of the earth enjoy easy and frequent intercourse these national indices in art tend to disappear. It is sometimes difficult to say with certainty whether a painting was produced by a Spaniard in Spain, or a German in Germany. Now the old saw-that there are no national barriers in art-becomes a platitude....

As a nation we Canadians strive somewhat consciously to originate a type of art which shall be distinctive and unique and shall be acclaimed as national. It is a matter of pride mingled with a desire to add a new conception of beauty to the accumulated sum and perhaps a new idiom in art to delight mankind. If the geographic theory were as potent today as it was 200 years ago the task would

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be a difficult one, and the result complicated. In the Dominion there is a great variety of scenery and of human type, both picturesque and unusual, and it is impossible to name a truly representative landscape or a symbolical figure. Some consider the habitant the true type; others think first of the Red Indian, the cowboy, the lumberjack, the trapper, or the upstanding young farmer.

In landscape the types are even more distinct. There are those who regard the Georgian Bay model—a rock, a jackpine, and a lake, with or without snow—as the significant scene. Such stark and unfriendly pictures, lacking any hint of the presence or passage of men are repellent to many Canadians, yet for a period a group of Toronto artists painted nothing else and it is only fair to say that their canvases were chiefly responsible for winning for Canadian art generous recognition abroad. And such themes Tom Thomson developed into glorious designs rich in sentiment and glowing colour, which many of us are prepared to accept at present as the ultimate expression of Canadian genius.

Even more remote and inhospitable is the barren wilderness of snow and ice along the Arctic coast. But it has been beautifully painted, and represents a large part of our territories. The Atlantic coast has its individual aspects, and the pastures of old Quebec and Ontario are as sweet and comfortable as it is possible for landscape to be. The monotony of the prairies can impress itself upon the stranger, but acquaintance reveals aspects of quiet beauty which never fail to charm. The mountains are always a fruitful source of material for artists. There they may paint snow in comfort. The Pacific coast, I consider, as wider in pictorial possibilities than any other locality. It holds a unique charm in the life and monuments of both settlers and aborigines, and the setting of mountain, forest, and sea, is ever of the greatest grandeur.

A plea for art that is truly national is reiterated by many. Though I am conscious of racial pride in myself, and regard myself by reason of long residence as a Canadian, I confess I cannot see the possibility or even the desirability of such nationalism. Moreover I consider that a conscious striving to such an end will result in something unworthy. How shall the Canadian artist be influenced? We find him using all these types and more. How shall he express himself and the national spirit at the same time? Is the work of the Group of Seven the authentic and final expression of Canadian genius in painting? These are purely rhetorical questions. The answers belong to the future.

There is a regrettable tendency in this part of the world to underestimate Canadian art. It is apparent in the fact that English and Dutch

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and even American artists have been more favored by collectors. A gentleman who owns many fine pictures once told me that he had had no opportunity to buy Canadian work. It may be poor taste to introduce the subject of sales but it cannot be too strongly emphasized that art will not survive without them. Canadian art has earned respect inter-nationally and an honored place. Canadian pictures find purchasers in Europe and America in competition with the best.

The peripatetic dealers who penetrate Western Canada carry European paintings exclusively, the one exception being Mr. A. Luscombe Carroll,¹ who showed a few of C. J. Collings' water-colours at one time and Alan Barr's oils at another. From their one point of view this is no doubt a logical and admirable arrangement, resulting, in normal times, in self-satisfied patrons and satisfactory profits, but it is all wrong in another sense. ... Throughout the West these dealers have popularized certain artists who are their own men but who have no just claim upon us beyond the fact that they are generally sound painters. Take for example N.J.H. Baird, whose works are excellent, but so common here-about as to be almost epidemic. Those who have the wherewithal, and the desire, to acquire paintings flock to see what the dealer brings on his periodical visits. They do not move so willingly when an exhibition of Canadian art comes to town. This is inevitable, for the dealer handles only the eminently saleable type, wherein sentiment, agreement, colour and high finish abound and he avoids experimental canvases, identified by a variety of "isms," which are necessarily included in any modern show representative of a nation's art, such as the Canadian shows that come to our own gallery.

The young artist who hitches his wagon to the modernistic star affects to despise pictures of the saleable kind, but actually pictures may be both popular and prime. Art without merit rarely if ever achieves general approbation although it is true that recognition is often deferred to merit of a high degree. The established dealers in Montreal and, to a lesser extent, those in Toronto do traffic in Canadian art. They have established a good market for Krieghoff and Verner, Paul Peel and Blair Bruce, and for a large number of living artists as well. In the West the latter remains comparatively unknown particularly to the collectors. If our friends the itinerant dealers would only stock their trunks with Canadian work, and it is manifestly reasonable that they should do so, this unfortunate condition would be improved....

The "local" artist is afflicted with hopelessness induced by lack of appreciation and support. Art is essentially useless; if it is unwanted

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also it cannot survive. The total demand for native art in Western Canada today would scarcely serve to satisfy the economic needs of two painters' families. Tom Fripp at one time picked fruit for a livelihood; Fred Varley, A.C. Leighton, L.L. Fitzgerald, and Charles Scott expend their energies in teaching; Gus Kenderdine worked a ranch for fifteen years; Frederick Cross is an engineer—all these, excepting Fitzgerald, were expensively trained and accomplished painters before they settled in the West. Yet many pictures are sold, chiefly those whose glamorous origin was in Europe Thus it may be averred that the Western artist works under a heavy handicap; the wonder is that he still cherishes any desire to paint.

THE GROUP OF SEVEN

[*Vancouver Province*, undated; *Vancouver Province*, 4 April 1936;
The Winnipeg Evening Tribune, 30 January 1926; 12 March 1927, 3 May 1941.]

The sudden appearance of the Group naturally disturbed the quiet course of far more than seven academic painters, older, trained painters who had organized and maintained the powerful societies—the Royal Canadian Academy and the Ontario Society of Artists. The Group dominated all exhibitions by their vigor, brilliance and sheer size. Many of the more conservative men had been painting landscapes in a some-what less aggressive style, but which they felt to be just as distinctively Canadian as the Group landscapes. But on the whole they accepted the situation philosophically, and not one was weak enough to change his style or stoop to imitation....

There was never any formula of expression or any philosophy to which all adhered. They have ideals, a national spirit, and a common enemy. To A.Y. Jackson the enemy is, categorically, "The Dutchmen," because Montreal has given little help of any kind to Canadian art, but so much to the sophisticated dealer for examples of the Dutch school that the city is said to possess more of them than any other city on the continent. To the others the Me noir is the artist who paints Canadian landscape as though it were enveloped in the atmosphere of Europe, lacking its actual brilliance and strength....

Besides denial of compromise regarding the physical aspects of Canadian landscape, the Group of Seven set themselves to interpret rather than reproduce and this they have done with a fine knowledge of form and great dignity of expression. The sheer beauty of their paintings is found in rhythm,

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often in colour. There is no warmth, little sentiment and no humor, but sobriety, even austerity and grandeur in their paintings. They are distinctly emotional....

These grim and moody slices of Canadian landscape-vast canvases, symbolizing the vastness of the Dominion-compel the gallery visitor's attention. By their inordinate size, breadth, and colour they dwarf everything else. The small or quiet or delicate painting is rendered utterly insignificant; its part is that of a piccolo in duet with a factory whistle.... They seek for the dynamic in Nature; the pastoral has no charm for them. They are interested in the effects of storm, famine, fire, chaos, intense solitude and cold. They achieve grandeur and repellent beauty, but the earth they portray is not mother earth.

Lawren Harris painted the banks of a sluggish river in Algoma as it impressed him....² It is masterly, and successful in that it reflects his emotion, but it impresses one with the horror of solitude in a haunted forest. Reaching branches threaten and danger and terror lurk in the gloom behind them....

Tom Thomson was born near Owen Sound in Ontario, and as a young man found himself in Toronto working as a commercial artist, acquiring skill in design and lettering. His love of art was only equalled by his passion for the woods and lakes of his native North. He reconciled the two in the obvious manner. Whenever possible he went north to paint and only returned to his desk when his money was gone. Sometimes he replenished his purse by acting as guide to fishing parties He began by making faithful transcripts of the scenes before him, as every landscape painter must begin, taking no liberties with nature. Among his associates were J.E.H. MacDonald, Arthur Lismer, Fred Varley-all young Englishmen-and Frank Carmichael, Frank Johnston and Tom McLean, born and bred in Canada. None had had the training usually considered necessary for an artist, but all determined to become painters, each helping the other.

Lismer knew something of the mechanics of painting and the chemistry of paint-he had studied at Antwerp-and he was Tom Thomson's frequent companion on sketching excursions. But the latter made his long trips alone, penetrating the wild area of lakes and rivers known as Algonquin Park. There were other influences that determined the trend of Thomson's development. Lawren Harris, fortunately for Canadian art, has always been an enthusiast and he has been able to materialize his ideas. For example, he built a block of studios on Severn Street, Toronto, which was intended to be the workshop

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of those Canadian artists who were doing distinctive work and refused to be bound by European traditions. He made it possible for A.Y Jackson to move from Montreal to Toronto and to work with an undisturbed mind. He has done a great deal for the cause, apart from the influence of his own fine painting.

Jackson, a highly trained painter and Thomson, the unsophisticated commercial man, shared a studio in the new building when it was finished in 1914. It was there that Thomson's final manner of expression was shaped. His sense of design, his feeling for colour, and his knowledge of nature, were his own, but he now augmented his slight experience in the craft of picture-making. He added vigor, simplicity and a realization of the solidity of form, and finally he was able to transfer onto canvas an entirely new conception of beauty in landscape. He showed us *The West Wind*, *The Jack Pine*, *A Northern River*, *The First Snow Ducks*,⁷ but the period of his apotheosis was brief. Jackson enlisted, and sometime afterwards, in the summer of 1917, Thomson was drowned in Canoe Lake, Algonquin Park.

The Group of Seven was formed in 1919⁴ in Toronto. Members were Lawren Harris, J.E.H. MacDonald, A.Y Jackson, Fred Varley, Frank Carmichael, Arthur Lismer and Frank Johnston. There were no meetings, only exhibitions. They suffered whether alone or in company, for the journals ridiculed them unmercifully. It was an early painting of MacDonald's that released the first storm of criticism and invective-*The Tangled Garden*.⁵ This was exhibited in Toronto in 1915,⁶ together with *Elements* and *Rock and Maple*,⁷ either of which, wrote Hector Charlesworth, might just as well have been called Hungarian Goulash, or Drunkard's Stomach.

Echoes of this vituperation and derision are still heard, but in diminishing volume and mingled with praise and sweet words. And in the meantime the absurdities produced by some of our younger and more sophisticated rebels have reduced critics to a state of mute bewilderment and have served to convince them that the landscapes of the Group, upon which all their adjectives were wasted, are not so bad after all....

They, however, gained instant recognition by virtue of the fact that they contrived to enrage their critics. If they had been ignored, or lavishly praised, it may be that their work would have suffered and the bonds of brotherhood strained. A kite rises against the wind. But now the Group has an established reputation for forceful and original work and its influence is constantly apparent in the productions of our younger artists....

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There has been a lot of talk about Canadian art expressing national characteristics One would be sorry to think that the "Seven" had founded a school which is considered either national or typical. Not that I cannot admire its produce, but it is not entirely an original school, and it deals almost exclusively with the less pleasing aspects *of* our country....

The prolonged controversy over the merits *of* the products of the group is sometimes needlessly bitter. Artists and laymen take sides and the latter have generally complicated matters by ignorant assertions. F.B. Housser's book *A Canadian Art Movement*,⁸ though I found it interesting and valuable from an historical standpoint, actually endows the group with exaggerated glory. Ernest Fosbery the Ottawa portrait painter, describes certain reiterations contained in the book as myths in a letter to Toronto's *Saturday Night*.⁹ Three myths are—that members of the group were the first to appreciate the pictorial value of pine trees; that the group turned to nature with unsophisticated eyes, denying any aid from tradition; that the movement is new. As to the first, Durer frequently introduced pine-trees into wonderful landscapes backgrounds ...and during the four centuries which have passed since then artists have never despised them. Pieter van Everdingen, in the seventeenth century, painted them in preference to any other trees; the Japanese loved them and Canadian landscape painters, who preceded Tom Thomson, certainly never neglected them. Mr. Fosbery points out in regard to the second myth, that nearly all the seven were trained in European studios. The two who were not, had European-trained teachers in Canada. The movement is new only inasmuch as all art is individual. Their ideals are not unique and similar work has been and is being done elsewhere. The group will readily agree with Mr. Fosbery in this....

The Group of Seven have really been unfortunate in their apologists. They have had a great deal of advertisement, but it has generally been at the expense of other painters. The very size, strength and brilliance of their paintings is murder to small and delicate canvases when they hang in company on an exhibition wall. But in spite of this, most artists derive some pleasure from each. They are generally appreciative and uncritical and observant of beauty as manifested in any phase of art. Those of the Seven that I know intimately do not regard their work as ultimate perfection, nor do they despise more conventional art. The comparatives, exaggerated eulogisms, and drastic condemnations come from the less enlightened layman, who constitutes himself a critic....

The Group of Seven disbanded in 1933, and its members since have gone their several ways. Harris has become a pure abstractionist; Lismer

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a kindergarten specialist; MacDonald has passed on; Carmichael has turned to water-colours; Varley seems lost on the west coast. Only A.Y Jackson carries the dwindling torch.

I don't think the hoi polloi is even yet "sold" on the work of the Group, but its influence persists. Few of the younger Canadian artists remain unaffected by its salutary insistence on pattern ...There is strength in numbers, virtue in repetition. Thus the Group of Seven basked in the spotlight of publicity for a while-in fact they almost monopolized it, for in Canada publicity is strictly limited as related to art-while the unattached artist, with better technical equipment than was common in the group, sulked in the shade....

C.J. Collings, for example, earned more encomiums in the London press than did Tom Thomson. One reputable critic claimed that his water-colours are among the most remarkable achievements since the days of Turner. The Times described his art as inspired Arthur Heming was well thought of in London through his exhibitions. One critic considers that his work will be a legacy to Canada. J. W Morrice was in his day the best-known Canadian painter in Europe, displacing Paul Peel in the role.... Horatio Walker was a medallist in Paris, Chicago, Buffalo, Charlestown, St. Louis, Pennsylvania, and San Francisco. Our National Gallery paid \$ 12,000 for his Oxen Drinking. I have heard it said that Walker received a higher price for one of his pictures than was ever paid for a contemporary painting in America. Sir Wyly Grier is equally well-known.... Clarence Gagnon is also a Salon medallist and he was one of the great etchers of 20 years ago. Kenneth Forbes...in 1931 won the Proctor prize for the best portrait in the National Academy show in New York....

I can't make a list of all the Canadian artists who have won medals or prizes abroad-they are too many-but I might mention F H. Brigden and Eric Bergman of Winnipeg. It is to be hoped that these men will be accorded a place in future histories of art in Canada no less prominent than that of members of the defunct Group of Seven, and of its offspring, the Canadian Group.

TOM THOMPSON

[The *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 25 May 1929.]

We rely on the schools to instill in the minds of our children love for their country, respect for its institutions and traditions, veneration for its heroes, in short, a proper sentiment of Canadianism. The polite hero is accorded his eulogy; the art of digging, considered agriculturally and metallurgically with

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its astounding results, is dealt with impressively, the whole thing seems to be done thoroughly on the material side. The intellectual pursuits of Canadians seem to be a little neglected. Yesterday I chanced to pick up the history book used in grade six, which one of the children had brought home to study and I was astonished to find in it a very definite statement to the effect that Canada had not as yet produced a genius in painting. The author, of course, may have compiled his book years ago, before the fame of Tom Thomson or Charles J. Collings had reached the prairies, in which case the edition should be revised. Or he may apply the word genius in a strictly limited fashion, establishing a standard of judgment by the performances of Rembrandt. At any rate, Canadian art, though of some merit abroad, will need its apologists at home if the younger generation takes this depreciatory comment as veridical, as no doubt it does.

Better qualified critics acknowledge the consummate creative power of these masters of painting. Besides Thomson and Collings there are others to whom we cannot decently deny the possession of the divine spark. All of them satisfy Northcote's demand that the aim of the artist should be to bring something to light out of nature for the first time. New vision, new beauty. Tom Thomson's decorative landscapes were described by one eminent English critic as "unique in the annals of all art." He was hailed as the "artistic discoverer of Canadian landscape." The Jack Pine, exhibited in London was said to be the most remarkable work at Wembley. His "intensely moving landscapes" were described as "real triumphs." The Jack Pine, a "devotional meditative study," should be familiar to all Canadians. The National Gallery has published a reproduction in colour, but it may be too much to hope that it ever will replace the Scented Memories and the My Mother's and other essential furnishings of the Canadian home. Thomson was drowned in 1917, a few short months after he had become fluently articulate in art. There is a monument to his memory in Algonquin Park, of which J.E.H. MacDonald, who had a hand in raising it, wrote, "The canoe man passing to and from what is known as Joe Lake may see, if he looks, the little cairn shouldering into the skyline above him. The visitor at Mowat Lodge will note it a mile or more across the water, a unique landmark to Canadian genius...."

J.E.H. MACDONALD

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated.]

The death of J.E.H. MacDonald came as a shock to all who knew him. We were prepared in a way; during the last two years he had been ailing, and

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a recent stroke seemed to sap his vitality. He was a tall and straight, though somewhat slender figure, ruddy of countenance, deliberate in movement. He had a friendly eye and was endowed with a gracious manner and much simple dignity. I remember him at more than one gathering at the Arts and Letters Club in Toronto, erect on the stage, reading in a different voice one of his famous odes which were exceedingly funny and spiced with enough ribaldry to draw howls of laughter from the audience. He was popular both in the club and without.

Our intercourse was never constant. We met at long intervals. But I knew him well enough to recognize and admire his sterling qualities, his serious attitude towards his profession, and his interest in the work and the affairs of others. At one time when we were talking in his studio on Severn Street, he expressed the wish that I should possess an example of his painting. I selected a sketch done at La Have Islands, Nova Scotia-an oil painting characteristically low in tone, but in colour rich and glowing. The scene is a bay, a natural harbor, with fishermen's shacks around it. There are rocks in the foreground covered with seaweed. It is frankly representational.

Although MacDonald was known as a formal designer of outstanding merit and originality, his landscapes manifested less obvious consideration for design and ordered movement than those of any other member of the Group of Seven. His work was by no means lacking in qualities, but he did not distort or uglify nature in order to achieve or to emphasize them. Jackson's well known wavy line calls cheerfully from the exhibition walls. "Sec my rhythm." Harris' pearly mountain-forms sedately whisper, "Observe my pattern." But MacDonald's sombre scenes are still; they are aloof and mystic; they are tense and brooding; they exude the very essence of poetry; if such an illusion may be applied to landscape. Their appeal is immediate The effect is clearly expressed, but the means are hidden. He did not resort to formalism of any kind, realizing that such treatment is liable to disrupt any understanding between artist and his public....

Like Jackson, MacDonald best handled a comparatively small canvas-a 24-inch by 30-inch for example. Their very large works do neither of them justice. The latter's *Solemn Land*, painted in 1922,^o however, is regarded by many as a great picture. At that time the Group was obsessed with the dark beauty of Algoma. *Solemn Land* is the apotheosis of this obsession. Gloomy, austere, remote-it fascinates yet repels.

Previously, MacDonald found his subjects in and around Toronto, at Georgian Bay, and in the Laurentians. Latterly he had painted the Rocky Mountains and

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much of his best work was inspired thereby. The vastness and majesty of the ranges, the silence of the high plateaus, the evanescent mists and rainbows, and the rolling clouds awakened an expressive response to their beauty. There, ultimately, his spirit found nourishment. On more than one occasion I have described poems in pigment distilled by MacDonald from the “immutable essences” of the mountains-pictures that rank with the best of their kind....

A. Y. JACKSON

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated.]

Jackson is one of those fortunate painters who remains undisturbed as to the possible advantages of another medium than that which he has chosen for the expression of his own idiom in landscape. He has an occasional fling at pen-drawing, but apart from that, during his whole career he has been faithful to the oil medium Jackson's fidelity is the result of conviction. He has acquired a high degree of facility in technique, an assured and beautiful manner of brush-work, which, combined with a large knowledge of nature, resulting from years of patient observation, has earned for him the reputation of being one of the best, certainly the most devoted, landscape painter in Canada....

Jackson has pursued the inevitable course, refining his art, enlarging his experience. He seems to have abandoned the very large canvases with which, I felt, he was least happy and now limits himself to a size approximating 24 inches by 36 inches which he invariably fills with distinction. For some years he has played with the idea of linear rhythm, introducing in all his compositions a wavy line which gave a slow and graceful movement, but this recipe, too, has been abandoned I believe-these recurrent undulations have been ironed out and in his latest work, he more nearly approaches realism....

MacDonald's sketches and more especially Harris', often indicate the final treatment the subject will receive when it is enlarged or finished in the studio. The subject to them is a simple tune which requires orchestration or a theme upon which they will write variations. Jackson's approach to nature is no less profound, but his sketches are more representational, rather local than cosmic and for that reason have a more direct appeal to the man in the street. They are impeccably arranged; Harris' are deliberately composed and composition implies invention.

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LAWREN HARRIS

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated; 17 October 1931; undated.]

I would like to see a gallery full of Lawren Harris' work-it would have to be a big one. Only then could one appreciate his genius to the full-the vigor and rhythm of his line, the stark simplicity of his form, and his cool and harmonious colour. The landscapes that he chooses to paint, while legitimate subjects in themselves, serve to illustrate some emotion, losing thereby something in naturalistic quality, but becoming impressive and dramatic....

Harris approaches his mountains with no regard to topographical accuracy. He uses them largely as a basis for chromatic renderings of radiant light, which have much spiritual but little emotional quality, and are more profound than pretty. Within his self-imposed limits, Harris is highly successful in these canvases.

He is an apostle of light, which he paints in clear transcendental effulgences. Harris' art is ordered, the result of verbal experience, but of deep meditation also. The fact that he sails in deep waters in splendid isolation has endowed him with sympathy for all others who display even a hint of the same desire. Though his skill with the brush and his knowledge of the craft and traditions of painting-the result of good and hard training-is exceptional and of the utmost value in his art, he has joined a vociferous minority in decrying tradition and academic training. It is an unsound doctrine.

FRANK JOHNSTON

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 29 January 1927.]

Much of the dazzling colour-the "jungles and jangles of iridescence"-in the first group exhibition of the Toronto Seven came from the brush of Frank Johnston. His contributions were some of the records of his impressions of a glorious fall in Algoma-in 1918-when the forest revealed unusual prodigality in warm pigmentation. The sharp contrasts peculiar to this land at that season admirably suited the style of painting he had begun to develop. Yellow leaves against purple-grey rock; scarlet foliage against a scale of greens-whatever it was, he adapted and arranged on panels with great decorative skill. The contrasts in form also he used to advantage. I always recall with pleasure a picture by Johnston owned by Mr. A.O. Brigdon. It is a vista of tree-tops-flaming domes of foliage with pines, dark green spikes like minarets protruding from amongst them, and in colour it has the richness of a fine Mosaic from ancient Byzantium.

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Harris, Jackson and MacDonald failed to find in purely decorative painting a suitable vehicle for the expression of their aesthetic convictions and soon turned to the problem of a more vital and convincing statement of form. In this they were in sympathy with modern movements elsewhere. Perhaps Johnston was content with painting unvexed by philosophy; at any rate, he left the group after an association of about three years.

The break came at the time of his appointment to the Winnipeg Art School. He has remained true to his ideals and among imaginative painters in Canada, still occupies the leading position. His art is light and graceful, reflecting a happy temperament. He leads one among pleasant places, whilst some of his former associates try to involve one's spirit in a cataclysm. He is gay, whilst they are sombre. One of his Wembley pictures, *Northern Lights*, gained some praise from the British critics and, I believe, it was reproduced in one of the leading monthlies in London. In this painting he succeeded where many have failed in suggesting a star-strewn sky and he cleverly augmented an illusion of immensity by his treatment of bare saplings in the foreground and diminutive figures in the middle-distance....

FRANK CARMICHAEL

[“Wet Paint,” 78-82.]

I knew what Frank Carmichael could do with oil paints, but I never chanced to see any of his work in the less popular medium until a few days ago, when, on my urgent request, he sent me a parcel of sketches. Mr. Carmichael broke into the profession of art in his teens as a junior commercial artist with a Toronto firm. He saved enough money to go to Europe to study and went, but he was back in Canada in 194. It was in 1925 that he first sketched successfully in water-colour. He camped on that occasion at Jackfish and Coldwell on the north shore of Lake Superior. This austere remote country he has made his own in art. He was accustomed to hear the fatuous assertion that water-colour did not lend itself to the interpretation of such landscape and for many years his experiments seemed to favour this view, which indeed explains its prevalence. It is difficult a medium....

Mr. Carmichael saw the tremendous possibilities of water-colour. Perhaps he was piqued by its lack of response. But he determined to master it, just to prove, as he says, that it had all the possibilities he saw in it. The interest in his pictures is always set well away from the spectator and is never placed in

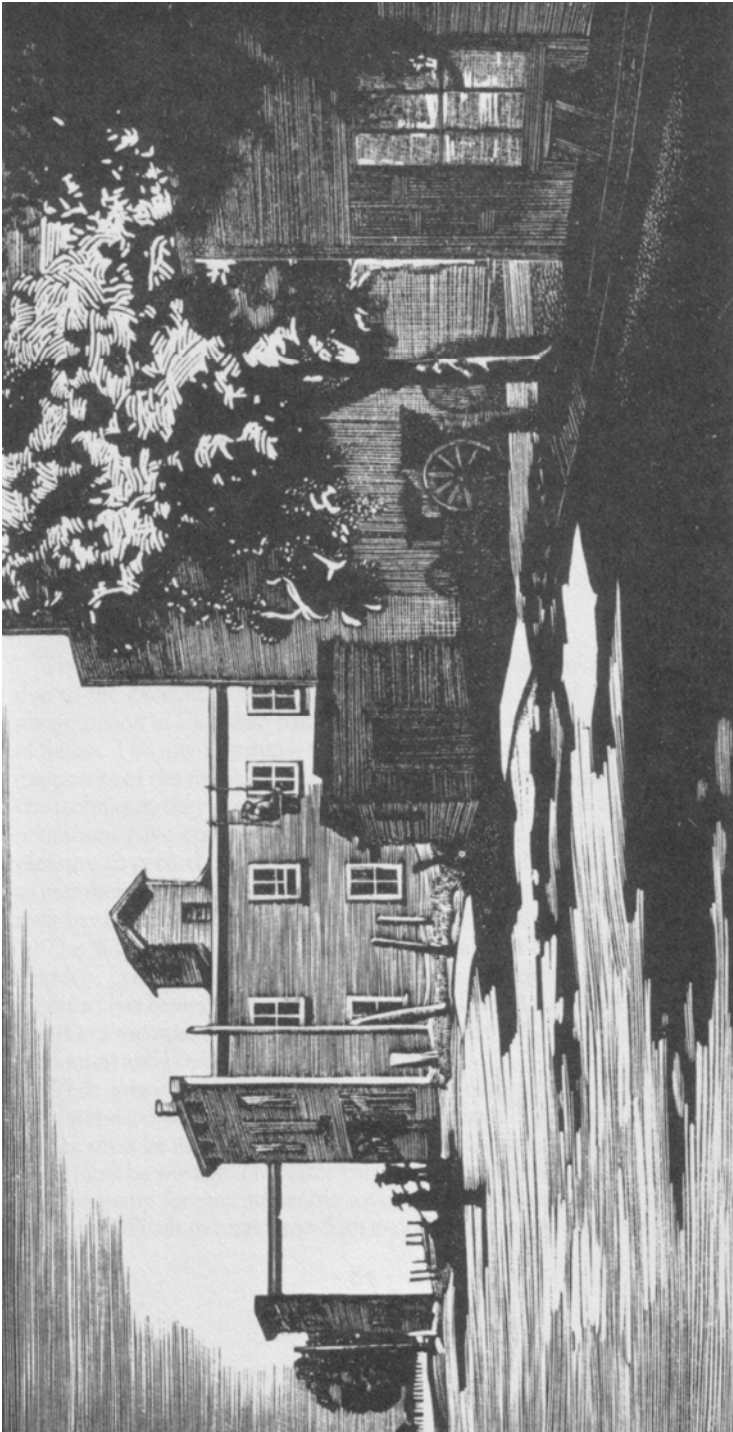
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the foreground. Nothing obstructs the clear view of his romantic distances, neither a screen of foliage nor a tangle of branches near the eye. Pattern derived from such elements often is obvious, always flat, and where interest is centered in a point beyond, has little structural affinity therewith. Mr. Carmichael's lineal arrangements are homogeneous and every form, whether solid like rock or diaphanous like vapour, has some dynamic significance in the design. That which cannot be moulded to a considered purpose is eliminated; it ceases to exist for him. But Mr. Carmichael's attitude towards nature is not merely selective. It is directed by profound thought, interpretative, never purely representational. He manipulates form and colour in an endeavour to convey some cosmic truth, a truth more vital if less obvious than that the average landscape painter perceives, or, if he perceives, will consider pictorially.

The liberties he takes with the various aspects of form are strictly governed by a proper regard for probability. He is a realist to that extent. His approach is devotional. The grandeur of that vast country which he paints overwhelms the imaginative soul, points his insignificance, his futility. The comprehension of its massy permanence spares only hope to save him from utter spiritual debasement....

The essential spirit of Gothicism is rampant in Mr. Carmichael's work. It is expressed in the upward flow of lines, the subordination of all horizontal tendencies. The contours of steep mountains echo those of the pines, those dark figures pointing forever to the sky. The same leaning toward verticality is apparent in the hill villages he draws-in the exaggerated sharpness of the gables of all the houses. Mr. Carmichael's line is emotional; dignity, which tends to austerity at times, is achieved by other means. There is no vestige of humour or flippancy in any of his works, but often a lyric note, which, with his quality of colour, goes straight to the heart, and the conviction is ever in the mind of the spectator that he can strike this note at will.

None of the chancy effects that the aquarellist is so often tempted to adapt are to be seen in his pictures; there is no evidence of adventitious aid. He paints directly, rapidly, impelled only by the thought the scene inspired. Every brush-stroke contributes to the one end. No part is permitted to display beauty in itself, but only in relation to the whole. He makes it manifest that the tree owes life to the elements, the soil to the rock; that the movements of water are directed by the winds and the configuration of the earth. The unity in these designs expressed universal interdependence, a Guiding Hand. Mr. Carmichael is fluent in expression; his themes are new and worthy; he has



Stockton, Manitoba, 1932, Wood engraving, 9.3 x 17.8,
The Winnipeg Art Gallery.

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found a brooding beauty in nature, deeply moving and hitherto obscure....

Mr. Carmichael has lived and worked in Ontario all his life, save for the short excursion to Europe. He has a strong affection for his country and a great faith in its future in art. Not rabidly national, he believes that art is the expression of that inner life developed through constant contact with everything around us....

The Canadian painter is especially fortunate. He may be true to his country in that he never paints outside her borders, yet, though his taste in landscape may be absurdly capricious, he may find somewhere or other just what he wants. Mr. Carmichael's interest never has been diverted from the Canadian scene, though I do not believe he has painted on the east coast or the Pacific where the atmosphere is humid. It is the clear air of the interior that he loves....

THE CANADIAN WATER-COLOUR SOCIETY

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 1933.]

The growing importance of the Canadian Water-Colour Society, due to the excellence of its exhibitions, is without doubt one notable phenomenon in Canadian painting since the rise and fall of the Group of Seven. The membership is still small but it is active and, as younger exponents of the medium achieve the desirable standard in art and in the technique, they are invited to augment the band of the elect. Such invitations have come to be regarded as an honor. It is, therefore, a pleasure to record the election of two well-known Winnipeg painters as members of the society—H.E. Bergman and William Winter. A third member is F Brandtner, who lived here until a year ago.

The Winnipeg element in the society has always been strong. Fred Brigden, president of Brigdens Limited, is a past president; Charles Comfort has been treasurer for some years. Tom McLean and Harold Ayers are members. Other western members are A.C. Leighton, James Dichmont and Frederick Cross, all of Alberta.

While membership is an honor it is also a responsibility. The technical standard which has earned encomiums from English and Scottish critics, must be maintained, and more important still, the spirit of new work must be worthy. The latter consideration in these days is a serious one; so many foreign influences assail the very foundation of art. It becomes difficult to retain firm faith in our traditions, to trust our ideals and when we do achieve

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this state, to withstand the parrot-like taunt of the rebels who cry, "Academic, Old-fashioned, Victorian."

The Governor-General¹¹ made some apt remarks on this matter in the course of his latest speech. Dealing with the western mind-its acute sense *of* history; its unhurried nature; its willingness to accept discipline and to endure change; its sense of humor and proportion-he proceeded:

"I suggest these characteristics to you as a step toward the definition and understanding of that great tradition which is the heritage of the English and French peoples. It is the basis of our politics; it is the basis *of* our art; it is the basis *of* our thought; and it is the basis of our conduct. Today it has many critics. Because it involves discipline, it offends the natural rebel. Because it is based upon history, it is antipathetic to ...the rootless folk who have no links with the past. Because it has balance and poise, it has no creed for the neurotic. Because it is rich in spiritual ideals, it is no creed for the materialist. Because it is the faith of free men it can never be a creed for the slavish and timid."

"I have called it the central culture of civilization and I believe that is a true description. There are other cultures in the world, each with its own value for its own people. On them I pass no criticism, except to say that they are not ours and that they do not mix well with ours. There is a good deal *of* anarchy in our art and letters today caused by permitting alien elements-Slav, Mongol, Negroid-to intrude into a sphere in which they have no place. These elements have their value no doubt, but that value is not for us and I do not believe that we shall have again great poets, great painters, or great thinkers, except by a return to the tradition which in the past has produced the first order *of* genius and whose resources are not exhausted."

I have dealt with this phase *of* contemporary art so frequently that I feel sometimes I am flogging a dead horse. The danger of the influences described, however, is very real and if they prevail art will be dead indeed. Few voices are raised in support of tradition, whilst propaganda directed by the rebels fills the journals. Modern art criticism is often as unintelligible as the chattering of apes....

ERIC BROWN AND THE NATIONAL GALLERY CONTROVERSY

[The *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, December 1932.]

It would be interesting to scan the list of 100 Canadian artists from coast to coast who have signed an agreement that until a radical reform

has taken place in the management and policy of the National Gallery at Ottawa, particularly in the selection of pictures for its annual show, and for representative Canadian exhibitions in Britain and abroad, they pledge themselves to refuse to send any of their works to the National Gallery or to any exhibition initiated by it.² I can think of only a few "prominently known" names which may be included, and I doubt if this threat will materially change the national character of exhibitions in question.

The quarrel is a chronic one and began at the time of Mr. Eric Brown's appointment as director of the National Gallery, which, coupled with a dash of personal animus, was indeed its primary cause. The merits of the appointment need not be mooted here. Mr. Brown has satisfied the governments of the past twenty years, and has acted with judgment and honesty always. The fact that his actions have displeased, or rather incensed, a few of our academic painters is not surprising. It is impossible to please everyone. There are many factions among painters, each with its staunch supporters, who are at times rabid. It needs a superhuman mind to cope with them—to determine the relative importance of each in terms of artistic, national, and expedient value. Any mere man faced with the necessity of judging between them is bound to disclose his personal bias, or at any rate he is accused of doing so by one faction or the other. A charge of partisanship is easily made.

Now Mr. Brown does not rely solely on his own judgment and I believe he has never done so in the matter of selecting pictures for exhibition. The judging is done by committees of artists. The annual Canadian exhibition in January is large, comprehensive, and I believe, representative. It should be. It is selected entirely by artists. Mr. Brown is usually a member of the jury which makes selections from the Royal Canadian Academy exhibition which precedes the Ottawa show and from which a selection is invariably made to form a nucleus for the other. This year the other members were the late J.E.H. MacDonald, R.C.A.; Mr. E. Wylly Grier, P.R.C.A.; and Emanuel Hahn, R.C.A. A group of artists forms the jury in each of the western provinces and performs the same thank-less task. They get black eyes too.

A few days ago a collection of water-colours was sent to Edinburgh for exhibition there and at other centres in the United Kingdom. It was selected from a large number of drawings submitted from the whole of Canada, by officers of the Canadian Society of Painters in Water-colour. What more could be done? I know these statements are facts because I have been on several of these juries in this province, once in Alberta, and I should have

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acted in Ottawa being vice-president of the Water-colour Society, had there been time for me to get there.

On the other hand it is certainly true that Mr. Brown had sympathized strongly with various new movements in Canadian art. First with the Group of Seven, culminating in the Wembley Exhibitions for scandals, as they were called by some few painters outside the group. The largest of the two galleries comprising the Canadian section was filled with large canvases by this group and its associates. From a spectacular standpoint this arrangement was most satisfactory but the other gallery certainly lost interest by comparison, although it contained work more characteristically Canadian and representing the vast majority of Canadian painters. I understand the disappointment of many of our older painters and sympathized with them, but I admired the exhibition and so did many of the English art critics.

But there is a feeling of injustice in the hearts of many which still rankles. British Columbia, for example, was very poorly represented at Wembley. The Academy and the National Gallery failed to agree on the appointment of the jury of selection and some members refrained from sending pictures for that reason. The whole affair was unfortunate. Nothing can be gained from expressing an opinion on its merits. It is past: that is all except the rankling.

What I want to see is peace and mutual help. The present system of selecting pictures for the National Gallery exhibitions is fair enough and there seems to me to be no good reason for a continuance of the quarrel. This I say although I am not associated with any new movement, nor have I any motive or authority for pleading the cause of Mr. Brown. So far as I can learn no Winnipeg artist is among the too who signed this protest.

ARTISTS IN MONTREAL

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 24 January 1931.]

The most desired result which a visit to Montreal promised was an opportunity of renewing acquaintance with those artists resident there whom I know and of meeting others whom I knew only through their work or by repute. There is amazing activity in art in this city and the promise has been amply fulfilled.

The exhibitions I have been to see are all small. It is refreshing to note that more than one Montreal painter cannot assemble enough work to make up

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a respectable show. They are prolific, but their canvases are in constant demand. I understand that a certain dealer has a waiting list of patrons for acquiring a picture bearing the signature of Maurice Cullen and that Mr. Coburn also cannot keep pace with his orders. An artist immured in a western town would hardly realize that such a state of things is possible. And there is Clarence Gagnon who is sublimely adamant when a dealer sinks to his knees before him and implores him to paint just one little thing for him.

Maurice Cullen, R.C.A. has devoted his time hitherto almost exclusively to portraying the streams and hills of the Laurentian country in sombre mood when winter is losing its grip and black waters flow through a white wilderness. But early last year he made an excursion to Banff and in an exhibition just closed at Watson's galleries, he showed a number of canvases painted there. The season is the same and the scenic aspects -snow-clad mountain, spruce, open water-are the same. The scale, of course, is grander but the effects attained in his earlier works are perhaps more convincing. Two Laurentian scenes in pastel were generally acclaimed as the finest in the exhibition. He is keenly interested in his new sketching field, however, and told me that he purposes returning to Banff in April to stay for a year.

Cullen's style is broad, and his mood melancholy, but he enjoys an enviable popularity. Three years ago in his annual show he achieved the distinction of disposing of nearly all his work. Montreal artists do not neglect the opportunities afforded by their picturesque surroundings. Paul Caron paints the habitant sympathetically and with true understanding. He gets much of his material in the Bonsecours market in winter. Charles Simpson also finds time to picture the French-Canadian farmer in his daily round. Herbert Raine and Robert Pilot have produced many etchings depicting Montreal streets and monuments. Horne Russell delights in rendering the life and bustle of the harbor.

There is an active group of artists who abjure fact and conscientious representation, and deal with the abstract." They are the modernists. A week ago there was an exhibition of their work at the Art Gallery.

The veteran, John Hammond, is holding an exhibition at this time, too, which I hope to go and see. Always a traveller, he recalled for me his visit to Japan, undertaken at the behest of the C.P.R. when he walked through the country with pack and paint-box slung over his shoulders in total ignorance of the language. He made known his wants by signs and paid his bills by inviting a creditor to pick his due from a handful of coins.

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The other day I ploughed blindly through the debris of a howling blizzard to see an exhibition of paintings, drawings and prints at the Arts Club, by Edwin Holgate, who ploughed with me. He said that he liked to feel the snow on his eye-lashes. A tactful remark, I thought, as I removed my eye-glasses and thereafter picked a daintier path through the drifts that blocked St. Catherine Street. Snow does not disconcert Holgate. He spoke of getting out on skis in the worst weather, of painting with a temperature of thirty-five below zero, his colours congealed and refused to stay where they were put.

Holgate is not exclusively concerned with landscape; he paints the human figure with courage and understanding. Figure painting is a branch of art which Canadian painters of this generation have neglected. In several recent exhibitions Holgate's "nudes" have excited very favorable comment and one of them was acquired by the National Gallery. There is a healthy vigor and brilliance about his work. Some critics call it strident and harsh. It is lacking in suavity, it is true but Holgate is primarily a draughtsman interested in the fullest possible realization of form and not at all in delicate harmonies of colour....

Though modern, in that he reflects the spirit of the age, he is not, I am relieved to find, a distortionist. He does not search for the bizarre, nor does he indulge in the mad pigmental orgies of some of his contemporaries. He does not try to paint sounds, smells, mathematical equations or such things as the effects of music on the mind of the fish. He is sufficiently literal and represents things as they appear to be. He is not afraid of colour, nor of sacrificing literal accuracy when necessary for the sake of unity, rhythm, grace of arrangement or any other fundamental truth. He will break up a rounded, receding surface into planes in order to emphasize the recession....

Holgate has found much material on the distant west coast also. With Mr. Barbeau's party four years ago, he made numerous drawings and sketches, and these were afterwards incorporated into oil paintings and wood-engravings and now hang in the Totem room at the Hotel Frontenac at Ottawa.¹⁴

PAUL KANE IN THE WEST

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 9 January 1937.]

Paul Kane is criticized as an artist because he did not give himself wholly to nature even though a modern artist is under no such obligation. His landscape, it is said, is not purely Canadian, but is corrupted by a treatment

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strongly suggestive of the European scene as rendered by native masters; his horses are Arabian rather than Indian; and his aborigines pose after the style of Greek statuary; his buffalo, according to C. W. Jefferys, is the lineal descendent of the woolly quadruped imagined and depicted by the earliest discoverers on the reports of the shore-dwelling Indians whom they first met. This criticism is well founded and may be regarded as just since Kane published his pictures as authentic records of time and place. He stated his determination, on his return from four years' study in Europe, to devote whatever talents and proficiency he possessed "to the printing of a series of pictures illustrative of the North American Indians and scenery."

The European flavor crept into his work as the memory of his three year trip into the west grew less vivid with the passage of time. All his pictures were painted in the studio; his material was restricted to four or five hundred sketches and his memories. The sketches were necessarily slight, having been made mostly in awkward circumstances. The story of his drawing of the wounded buffalo is well known-how the beast suddenly roused himself and attacked him. Some of his Indian models were just as uncertain. There was Tomakus, who later murdered Dr. Whitman on the Walla-Walla. Kane described him as the most villainous-looking creature he ever beheld, yet he entered the lodge, and, as was his custom in these circumstances, commenced his sketch without speaking. Usually the sitter affected indifference and continued to sit, and this Tomakus did. But when the drawing was finished he asked Kane what he had been doing and insisted on seeing. What, he asked, did Kane intend doing with it? He was afraid Kane would give it to the Americans, whom he detested, and by that means put him in their power. He would take no assurance to the contrary and turned to throw the portrait in the fire. Kane grappled with him, snatched it away, and activated by the fiendish glare of the Indian, hurriedly left the lodge and mounted his horse. He momentarily expected an arrow in his back, but fortunately got clean away.

Whilst travelling Kane apparently took every opportunity to sketch. His opportunities came mostly at the portages and camps, but his time was invariably limited. At Lost Men's Portage he got lost himself and wandered for hours before thinking of signalling the party by shooting. (An answering shot immediately gave him his bearings.)

He found Fort Garry unattractive. "The country here;" he wrote, "is not very attractive." So he took a trip to Norway House, just as we do today, and found some good material on the way-notably at Berens

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river. One of his larger paintings represents a Saulteaux woman standing at the mouth of the river. He did at least one picture of Fort Garry, however, which hangs in the National Gallery, and represents the fort and the cathedral at St. Boniface with the river between. Winnipeg river he regarded as the most picturesque he encountered. While Mud and Slave Falls both fell to his brush.

The journey across Canada from Toronto to Vancouver is comfortably and speedily made today, but Kane found it both arduous and hazardous. One must read his journal to appreciate the tremendous change that came with the railway. Crossing the mountains was the worst stretch. The route lay from Edmonton to the Boat Landing on the Columbia through Jasper and over Athabasca Pass. The Athabasca river had to be forded a score of times and on these occasions Kane feared for his sketches. His unfortunate guides had to wade with bundles of them on their heads, the icy water up to their armpits.

Kane's comments on the scenery as he progressed are very interesting. Fort William's subtitle to Kakabeka Falls-the western Niagara-always reminds me that Kane considered the former surpassed Niagara in picturesque beauty.

About two hundred of Kane's sketches were exhibited in the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 1922-that was in the old Board of Trade building. They were loaned by a branch of the family then resident here. I should like to see them again, since I have only a dim recollection of them. It was formerly assumed that all the western sketches were handed over to George William Allen, of Toronto, together with the collection of curios and the hundred oil paintings he commissioned in consideration of his having financed the trip. The hundred oil paintings are now in the Royal Ontario Museum. Two other patrons were the Hudson's Bay Co., who arranged his transportation, and the government, which paid him \$300 for a dozen pictures in earnest of its pride in his achievements.

Kane devoted his life to the one thing never deviating from his purpose. His early manhood was spent in learning the rudiments of his chosen craft and in earning enabling money. Then he planned his great journey -one of the most magnificent sketching trips on record-and during the rest of his life he worked up his sketches and his journal to a state fit for presentation to the public.

Kane was born in Ireland and was brought to York (Toronto) when he was nine years old, but he regarded himself as a Canadian and spoke of York as his native town. At any rate he has a better claim than Krieghoff, who has lately been made so much of, or of the earlier sketchers of the western scene such as Murray and Ballantyne.

ARTHUR HEMING

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 22 December 1934.]

As an artist Arthur Heming's activity covers a period of 45 years, but as a painter, in the accepted sense of the term, he has still to complete his first lustrum. Yet now he is hailed by European critics as a great painter—"the great painter of Canada," which, besides marking a great personal achievement, represents a triumph for the school which the artist staunchly upholds; that is, the academic. No one dare accuse Heming of conservatism, although he accepts certain traditional desiderata which the modernist despises—sound draughtsmanship for one, and a sane consideration for probability in dealing with effects in nature. His pictures are suggestive rather than representational. Dramatic in theme and treatment, they do not shock the beholder by any studied or fortuitous deviation from the truth. They are readily apprehended, and need no tag. Heming has invented an idiom of his own, reflecting the circumstances and labours of a lifetime.

Many journeys in the northern wilds provided him with pictorial material; years as a magazine illustrator specializing in the delineation of wild animals gave him facility in expression; a dormant sense of colour, only recently discovered—this is the equipment of the artist, coupled with that fine quality of intellect and capacity for hard work without which no one may succeed in art.

Heming's early work was in black and white. Ten years ago his exhibition pictures were in the same medium, with the addition of yellow, and carried out in oil pigments. About four years ago he was induced, or perhaps the idea was derived from within, to work with a full palette. He was immediately successful, and within a year he had produced ten polychromatic compositions, all of which found purchasers. There is something remarkable about that. His subjects invariably illustrated primitive life in Canada.

Last June he took a score of these works to London, where an exhibition had been arranged at the galleries of Frost and Reed on King street. Despite hard times the success of the show was undoubted and immediate. The Canadian High Commissioner opened it formally. Patrons of the arts, intrigued by the laudatory tone of the press notices, flocked to attend and competed for the possession of these desirable canvases.

I can imagine well the charm these pictures of Heming's must have exercised. The scene would appeal as exotic. None of these Londoners would ever have seen snow such as this: early wet clinging snow; hard

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glistening snow in sub-zero weather; the garb of the human inhabitants of the white wilderness, and their occupations would seem strange; and the wild animals as delineated so gracefully and well would strike a note seeming rare to them as art....

Arthur Heming works in a light, roomy studio on the top floor of a building near the corner of Yonge and Bloor in Toronto. It is the very antithesis of the prevailing idea of an artist's work-room, being extremely neat and well-furnished, more likely a library, indeed but for the easel, the model throne, and such impedimenta as jars of brushes. When I was first told of Heming's outstanding success-it was in Toronto-a fellow-artist remarked that no one had ever seen Heming paint. His studio, he said, was always tidy like that, no matter when you happened to call. Tidiness, of course is one of Heming's fads-a nice one, too. It may be seen in his paintings and in his books as well as in his painting-room. I had to confess that I had not seen him actually at work.

I do not suppose for a moment that the artist has any idea of being secretive. We had not happened to call at the right moment. But whilst I cannot describe his practice in painting, I can at least explain his method of composition which he unfolded to me without hesitation. I hope I am not abusing a confidence, but much of my admiration for his work is based on his methods.

I gathered that his central theme is often some effect in nature whose beauty and surprise had kept it fresh in his recollection-sometimes an atmospheric effect, an unusual conformation of snow, or some particularly graceful pose of an animal. Miniature pencil drawings of this are repeated on a sheet of paper. At each repetition accessories are added and new detail visualized. Thus a design is built up in logical sequences. The accessories-they may be figures-may ultimately give the title to the picture, the true subject losing importance. He has no sketches and few notes; his observation is unusually keen and accurate and his memory is astounding. The picture is completed entirely from memory. To be able to work successfully in this way has always seemed to me to mark the highest point of technical development to which an artist can attain. My admiration for Heming's skill is unbounded....



WESTERN CANADIAN ART

[The *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated; 23 November 1929; 30 October 1926.]

FOR REASONS that are mainly geographical, Canadian art lacks unity and thrives in widely separate centres each of which is more or less wrapped up in itself. Of these Toronto is the largest and the most vociferous, so that, broadly speaking, Canadian art and the art of Toronto are almost synonymous terms for exhibition purposes. The artist who persists in clinging to a lone habitation in the far West, the far North, or the far East, is apt to lose a great deal in the way of recognition and its contingent amenities, publicity and patronage.

Take the case of Charles John Collings. He was too independent a soul to defer in any way to constituted authority in art wherever it might be. He went his own way and contrived to live happily in a remote corner of Shuswap Lake. he was a genius of whom Canada might well have been proud, yet I have never heard a voice raised in praise of his work in the East. The National Gallery has only one small painting. For some strange reason he is not regarded as truly Canadian though he came to Canada before Arthur Lismer, that ardent nationalist. The reason is strange, but it is not obscure: he failed to identify himself with the artists of Toronto. Our younger men are wiser ,...and as soon as they are weaned as artists, betake themselves to that land of promise, Ontario....

The Year Book of the Arts in Canada, 1928-1929,¹ comprises a collection of essays on the six major arts written by practising artists, wherein "tendencies rather than personalities" are discussed. That so wide a geographic field is involved would be sufficient reason, one would think, for the selection of essayists from different parts of the Dominion, but all of them live, or have lived, in Toronto, with the sole exception of Marius Barbeau of Ottawa, who, for all I know, may have lived there too. Thus the atmosphere of the Queen City pervades one section of the book. It is true that Toronto is pre-eminent in the arts, but the rest of the Dominion is not entirely deficient in

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art consciousness. The fact that “ Montreal artists do not exhibit much in exhibitions outside their own city” is no excuse for a writer on Canadian art to have to confess that it is difficult “to keep in touch with their art.” He may, of course, continue to write upon art in Toronto with perfect propriety....

Toronto is indisputably the Canadian centre for literature and art and it becomes increasingly apparent that, if they are to consider their own interests, artists and authors must gravitate in that direction. Unfortunately Toronto is acutely conscious of this and less fortunate cities-especially in the West-occasionally have to swallow some patron-age and criticism. In an article in *The Canadian Bookman*, there occurs the following: “The Westerner is timid and conventional in his attitude towards art. Exhibitions which would be considered mild or academic in the East are looked on as the works of extremists in the West. But one can confidently expect that in a few years the Westerners will be sending exhibitions East of things done in a bold, original way. The scale of the country is too vast for any picayune literal interpretation.” This confident rhapsody was written in connection with F H. Varley’s appointment as instructor at the Vancouver Art School. There may be some truth in it, but it would have come more gracefully from the pen of a Western writer. The implication that the “bold, original” way of the Group of Seven is the only desirable way of applying paint to canvas is open to argument. And why “original” if the writer desires to see a mass of imitative catastrophic canvases dedicated to the famous group. I do not wish to appear to condemn; on the contrary I have always found much to admire in the work of its more original members. But I do unhesitatingly condemn imitation or anything that savors of it....

MANITOBA ART

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 26 February 1930.]

The earliest recorded visit of an artist to Winnipeg is that of Paul Kane as contained in his book *The Wanderings of an Artist*.³ Here he made arrangements for seeing a buffalo hunt, and any who harbor any impression that an artist is essentially long-haired and anemic would do well to consider his capable, even heroic, participation therein, for he brought home his quarry and its portrait too. What emotion, if any, his pictures inspired in the hard-headed and hard-fisted inhabitants of that period is not told. No doubt they marvelled at his skill, with reservations regarding his sanity....

Western Canadian Art

Buffalo have vanished from the land, while artists have multiplied, and the populace has become pretty well versed in the arts knowing enough at any rate to refrain from speaking of painting as "hand-painted"....

It was not until 1899 that any concerted effort was made to foster and satisfy an appetite for art. In that year the women of the city, guided by Mrs. Mary Clay Ewart, founded the Western Art Association, whose professed purpose was to promote and help students. The beginning of the World War brought an end to the association and temporarily also to the activities of its members....

In the first decade of the century interest in art was growing though still somewhat uninformed and crudely humanized. Few had acquired the habit of buying, even of stealing, original paintings and good reproductions, such as may be bought cheaply now, were not available. Carbon enlargements of family portraits were very popular, in fact no home was complete without them Yet more than one professional artist contrived to squeeze a living out of that uncultivated and unpromising market. Victor Long deposited portraits in many a home and polished off a mayor a year. Frank Armington and his wife. Caroline, who now live and work in Paris, painted and made etchings that have brought them ultimate fame....

By tradition this should be a city of print lovers, and I venture to say no other city in the Dominion is at the present time more appreciative of their charms, or more understanding. In those days two other accomplished etchers made this their home-Cyril Barraud and George Fawcett....

George Fawcett played a losing game as a commercial artist, but with fine spirit. His consuming optimism has since been justified, for, leaving the city a few years after Barraud, he earned a fortune practising the same profession in a very short time in New York. He has etched persistently all his life; a catalogue raisonne of his total production would be a weighty tome.

The artists living in the city today carry on the print tradition. Eric Bergman, H. V. Fanshaw, A. J. Musgrove, Mrs. Newton, J. Jones and others, make charming wood-cuts, while Percy Edgar, who inherited Barraud's press, makes etchings, as do I....

Reverting to pre-war days, the Armingtons had a studio in the Stobart Block whose location is somewhere in the upper air of the Lyceum Theatre. The same building, perhaps the same office, was occupied later by Mr. Keszthelyi, a reputable portrait painter who organized a class for students.

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Mr. L.L. Fitzgerald had his first lessons from this accomplished Austrian....

Frederick Challener, R.C.A., came to the city about 1912 to paint the murals that grace the walls of the dining-room at the Royal Alexandra Hotel. He had the inclination to stay, if fate were propitious. But he went Leslie Beer left for Australia, I think, in the same year. He was an interesting painter of landscape, trained in Paris, and did much to further the cause of art by the direct influence he exerted on a group who met for study at his atelier in the Sanderson Block. D. McQuarrie, also a landscape painter, stayed on a while longer and was the first curator of the gallery.

It will be justly inferred that the presence of such a number of competent artists inspired ambition in a few youthful breasts, a keen desire for knowledge in a few others, and a certain amount of general interest. The aims of all were merged in unified endeavor; ...societies and associations were organized. The first society of practising artists was formed in 1902 and named the Manitoba Society of Artists which survived for ten years....

It would be unjust to speak of the development of art in Winnipeg without reference to Brigdens Limited, which has been, and is, an exceptional training school for artists. A vital proportion of the membership of the Canadian Water-colour Society is composed of men from Brigdens of Winnipeg. The determining influences are the fine original work of the president, Mr. Fred Brigden and the sane encouragement always available from the manager, Mr. Arnold Brigden, a true amateur. Eric Bergman and Percy Edgar are founding members still with the firm....

The Winnipeg School of Art was opened 1913 with Mr. A.J. Musgrove as principal. Sound in precept and skilled in technique, he had been induced to resign from his position under Greiffenhagen at the Glasgow School of Art. He remained until 1921 when he opened a school of his own, which still thrives. Frank Johnston, an artistic volcano from Toronto, carried on, followed by C.K. Gebhardt of Chicago. The present principal is Mr. L.L. Fitzgerald, a sane and competent leader, whose skill in art has already been hailed in distant places....

The Winnipeg Art Gallery had a short but glorious career. Fostered by the Industrial Bureau and financed by city and government grants, it grew and prospered, and came out of the war unscathed. Its walls were hung with paintings, prints and drawings representing modern expression at its best and in all its variety. Crowds enjoyed a continuously unfolding pageant of art.

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Support was withdrawn by one body after another and the devoted committee finally abandoned the gallery and applied its attention exclusively to the school. The last big exhibition was in the winter of 1924-25. In view of its undoubted popularity it seems strange that the sudden extinction of the gallery should have excited nothing in the way of protest. Complete indifference attended the demise and there were no flowers, no lamentations. The Society of Manitoba Artists' gallery passed away with as little commotion....

Today so far as sustained productions and supply in the field of art is concerned, Winnipeg is excellently well equipped, a fact that is generally appreciated. Were our public spirit as well developed we should not be lacking a gallery, nor a permanent collection of works of art, which we decidedly are and that most deplorably.

L.L. FITZGERALD

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 1 March 1930.]

I first saw Mr. Fitzgerald's landscape, *The Barn*,⁴ at the annual exhibition of the Society of Manitoba Artists. Its austere beauty was so appealing that I cannot get it out of my mind. Some who have seen it do not share my enthusiasm and to them this article is inscribed in the belief that they would be perfectly willing to like it had they the understanding. I do not know what the artist's particular impulse was, other than that which actuates any sincere painter to paint. I inquired, fearing that I might misrepresent him, but he left it to me.

It is often remarked that we are the slaves of convention. We do as others do least we appear abnormal. The slightest deviation from the conventional by an artist has been hailed invariably with fierce anathema, and, it might be argued, he must be doubly nervous in consideration of the fact that his performances have a much larger audience than those of the layman. An innovator's lot is not a happy one. But conventions change....

In this painting the one important divergence from conventional expressionism is the elimination of surface textures. Considered in apposition to Japanese repudiation of light and shade, or to the absence of line in impressionism, or of colour in a drawing, this is nothing to cavil at. Being a somewhat new device, it seems strange. It is only fair to presume that the artist has some good reason for adopting it and thus flouting convention. He has.

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The sheer walls of the barn are wrapped in luminous shadow, within which subdued lights dance and play as they are projected from other and sun-washed surfaces. The roof reflects little invisible clouds; the strips of sward in the foreground, mirror the sky. The relation of one thing to another—universal interdependence—is symbolized. Light is the expositor. “How many things,” said Cicero, “invisible to us, are seen by painters in shadows.”

The artist has excoriated his forms, stripped off their fractured and worn integuments, and he has rendered them as elemental or significant shapes with smooth, clear facets, upon which it is possible to represent subtle effects of light. Thus the wooden walls of the shack lost their material character and the trees too. By this means the theme is more simply and lucidly stated; no extraneous interest is permitted to interfere with its clarity and force.

Yet it is a fully orchestrated harmony. The ovate core of the shadow on the gable upon which the eye falls immediately and inevitably, is repeated throughout the design, in the trees and clouds and stooping figure. Contrasting with these curved contours, in order that the effect of harmony may be enhanced, is the straight-edged shack. Analyzed in regard to colour; a harmony of fresh greens is opposed to one of dull purples and the two are knit with a golden brown.

The trees have infinite charm. They are some distance away and a depression in the ground, likely a river bed, between them and the foreground, is admirably suggested. The gap to the left makes the skyline wonderfully interesting and is an important feature in the composition. One has a strong desire to see the front of the shack and its interior, to walk forward and investigate the possibility of the existence of a river in the hollow. The picture is provocative of thought in other directions also. It is a scholarly study of light and form and has an emotional quality that establishes its excellence as a fine work of art. To determine exactly the source of that quality is difficult, but it exists in part in the expressive outline. It was inevitable that outline, which during the Italian Renaissance became “dissolved in the shades of chiaroscuro,” should now regain favor. This is a splendid example of the rehabilitation of outline in landscape.

The surface quality of this picture merits a word of commendation. Many painters adopt a brutal method of impasto painting that compels one to view their work from a considerable distance and on closer inspection destroys one’s sense of illusion completely. Logically there should be no other reason than extreme size for forcing the spectator

away from a painting so that he may comprehend the design as a whole. Mr. Fitzgerald's handling is direct and workmanlike, yet his surface is agreeable, and offers no obstacle to the full comprehension of his furthest distances. The presence of a fly, or a hair, or, of any foreign substance, however small, on a canvas immediately annihilates the idea that the picture is a window through which to look out upon nature, and reduces it to its material elements, a yard of cloth and a pound of paint. The ridges and clefts achieved in pigment by untidy Impressionists have something of the same effect.

**A MIRROR HELD TO NATURE:
SOME COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS**

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 18 September 1937.]

When photography first became popular some time early in the Victorian era, it was freely stated that artists had lost their means of livelihood. I wondered last night what would have been said had colour photography been in existence at that time. At least there would have been more point to the statement.

We were looking at Mr. Arnold Brigden's pictures of the Rocky Mountains, photographed in colour and projected for our entertainment on a screen. I first saw a colour photograph thirty years ago, and I have seen many since but nothing like these, and I felt as enthusiastic as the Victorian scribes, though not so prophetic. If the object of pictorial art were nothing but illusion then the artist would indeed be lacking a job for we saw on Mr. Brigden's screen an illusion of reality, not only of vertical form and colour, but of depth, such as we had never seen before.

I thought the achievement of this third dimensional quality remarkable. The best of the pictures were even more convincing in that respect than twin prints seen through a stereoscope, or the considered efforts of a master painter-so true that the screen might have been a mirror held to nature. The same effects-whether trifling or titanic, exquisite or intense-that catch one's eye on the mountain trails, and sometimes thrill one's being with their beauty-I saw again in these photographs. Here was the larch, delicate in hue, fragile in form, an arabesque traced upon a sombre blue mountain. Rock and vegetation; the ephemeral and the eternal. Here was moss campion on a bed of shale; dryad draped luxuriantly

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over a boulder; arnica and erigeron; saxifrage and paint-brush-little spots of colour that delight the eye and relieve the mind of the depression often imposed by the immensity and timelessness of the mountains.

Here was a scree exposed to the full flare of the sun-a vast waste of fallen rock at the foot of a towering peak whose shadow impinged upon it. Far up the slope were tiny spots of white-mountain goats certainly-and on a rock shoulder above was another group. Here was a tarn with peaks reflected in its pale green depths, and here a meadow in Tumbling Glacier valley-tents set in a grove of larch-pack horses grazing contentedly-a summer sky gloriously blue-and the eternal peaks.

One's eye ranges over these pleasant scenes untrammelled, free, picking out here and there the little things that excites imagination-a fleck of colour, an animal, an effect of light or shadow-just as when one is in fact confronted by nature.

Therein lies a difference between a photograph and a painting. The artist constitutes himself a guide to nature, he directs the beholder's eye; he insists that this aspect, this collocation of shapes and colour shall been seen and that there shall be no disturbing influence. He obliterates everything that is not essential to his plan and by an ingenious disposal of lines and masses he leads one whither he will. A battery of cameras will produce identical pictures if directed upon the same subject, but a group of artists in the same circumstances will create scenes so dissimilar that even the fact of locality remains undeterminable.

I have the greatest respect for Mr. Brigden's skill in photography and for his flair for arrangement. He energetically disclaims any credit for himself and denies that he is an artist. However that may be, he has adopted a hobby, or rather a series of related hobbies-I must not forget his Alpine garden-that are full of interest to his friends as well as to himself and augment the sum of beauty in life....

ERIC BERGMAN: REVOLT AGAINST THE "MODERN"

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 2 January 1937.]

An artist in the west has more difficulty in achieving recognition than one who lives in or near the art centres of the world. He misses personal contacts which count for so much and unless his work is sound in construction and original in treatment and theme it is apt to be overlooked. Mr. Bergman's engravings, however, have on many occasions found favor with the juries

of international exhibitions in foreign countries and have been shown with some regularity and invariable success in Canadian exhibitions. He is represented by four new compositions in the second international which opened early this month in Warsaw. Equal success in sport or politics, or even in literature would have made his name familiar to every one in this, his own city.

A notable quality discernible in these delightful engravings is unusually sound craftsmanship. Mr. Bergman has practised the art since his fourteenth year, beginning in Dresden, in the best German tradition. The apparent ease and confidence with which he manipulates the graver is an inevitable result; nothing can replace long and devoted practice. He is capable of reproducing the meticulously wrought tonal effects of Timothy Cole, the last of the great masters of the nineteenth century; no type of technique seems to be beyond his capacity. Precision will often deteriorate into monotony, but the freshness and variety of his lines enable him to escape this pitfall. Such perfection of method as I have said, is unusual.

The amateur engraver of recent years has been anything but precise or skilful. Indeed since the time of the Impressionists, slovenly work has been condoned in all the arts; only now are good drawing and adequate craftsmanship coming into their own again. The time will come, I sincerely hope, when these qualities will be considered essential and when studies and sketches will be denied facilities for exhibition....

Mr. Bergman is not lavish in his use of pure black-by which it may be inferred that he is conscientious as well as industrious. It is the white in a wood-engraving that represents labour. Black is sometimes a refuge for laziness or incompetence, but it has a beauty of depth that is unique and very tempting to the artist. The just proportion of black to white has been estimated arbitrarily-it must be governed by taste, which is subject to mood and purpose. In a book it should approach in effect the grayness of a page of type-or so it is said; to my mind it should be a trifle darker, but for individual prints such as Mr. Bergman's a great deal more latitude is allowable. He has fixed a formula for his own use and abides by it fairly consistently, so that the majority of his engravings register the same general tone of gray.

The artist's enthusiasm for graphic art is only second to his love of music. He would like to incorporate the two in some way-to express in his own words, the rhythmic qualities of music through the lines of an engraving. This has been the dream of many a painter, but it has not yet materialized. It is perhaps impossible to transpose aural experience into visual facts. His latest engraving

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into visual facts. His latest engraving, which I have not yet seen but which now in the International Exhibition in Warsaw, expresses homage to the genius of Beethoven. I am sure that the expression is sane and more subtle than, for example, the representation of rhythm in the folds of a piece of fabric. Music of course, is expressed graphically in the score and what more can a true lover of music want!

ART IN ALBERTA AND SASKATCHEWAN

[The Winnipeg Evening Tribune, ca. 1931, 1g34.]

With Charles Scott in Vancouver I had the privilege last week of viewing a large and comprehensive collection of contemporary Alberta paintings. The occasion was the inaugural annual exhibition in Calgary of the newly-formed Alberta Society of Artists-an important occasion to those who look with sympathetic regard on the future art in Alberta, since a strongly knit provincial society must exert a beneficent influence.

Alberta teems with material in great variety, which may be termed potentially pictorial. Of all the prairie provinces it is-especially favored in this respect. Its particular glory is the mountain area, but there are plains as well, deserts and pasture lands, incomparable rivers and lakes. The varied beauty of the country explains in part an almost unanimous preference for landscape among the artists of Alberta. It is a preference, however, common to artists throughout the Dominion. In respect to Calgary there has been the direct influence also of Leonard Richmond, A.C. Leighton, and Lars Haukness-all landscape painters. The picturesque life of the province lacks at present an interpreter. No aspect of ranching is represented in the exhibition I saw; the Indian is left severely alone with the sole exception of N. de Grandmaison's portraits of Kootenay and Blackfoot types.... The artist of today rarely is satisfied to use the material at hand, or to record contemporary life. Yet so to do is his obvious duty both to the community of today and to that of tomorrow. The easy and popular course is to produce pure landscape, which is eternal, and of no possible value to future generations, or abortive experiments in pattern with only sufficient representation to make them intelligible. The latter idea is not new, but its recent irruption is excused on grounds that academic art had forgotten for a while the value or the necessity of design. I imagine the lesson has been learned and today canvases in which design only is treated with any degree of respect are already regarded with suspicion as anachronism....



The Clothes Line, Mamalilicoola, n.d., Wood engraving 12.3 x 12.5
The Winnipeg Art Gallery

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One at least shows judgment and taste in selection. His name is Frederick A. Cross. I understand he has been painting only ...for a very short period. He lives at Brooks, and is in charge of the C.P.R. irrigation works at the place. He paints in water-colour, in a style instinct with clarity and decision. His drawing *Drought* was selected without hesitation for the annual Canadian exhibition at the National Gallery. In this is depicted a farmstead set in a stony waste. The treatment is masterly, and the only blemish is that the sky is a trifle uninteresting in relation to its area....

James Henderson of Qu'Appelle, a very fine painter, does not concern himself with eastern exhibitions. His work is virtually unknown in the East. Until I visited Regina and saw his recent landscapes and his earlier Indian portraits, I had no idea that he had advanced so far. I have of course seen isolated examples of his art at intervals but his best canvases were unfamiliar. In many Regina homes his beautiful interpretations of scenes in the Qu'Appelle Valley add lustre and grace and emanate charm which I am sure must influence every beholder.

Out of sight and out of mind, Henderson rarely exhibits in the East and the honors that fall to artists who are more skilful than their fellows pass him by. The same restrictions are laid on the very large majority of artists living in the West. Thus of the forty members of the Royal Canadian Academy only one represents the West, and only one also of the same number of associates. The Academy cannot be blamed for this situation. The fault lies with the individual artist who neglects to make himself known.

Even more remarkable and regrettable is the fact that western artists, generally speaking, are as strange to each other as they are to those in the East. The painters of Calgary have little idea as to what is going on in art in Regina. This state of affairs is not too difficult to rectify. A fair start was made in 1933 when the Manitoba Society of Artists organized an exhibition of western art. It was incomplete but sufficiently interesting to justify its continuation at least as an annual event. It should have been shown not only in Winnipeg but in all the larger western centres; in that respect it was a failure. It must be obvious that a proper, well-conducted extension of this idea would be of inestimable value in fostering the appreciation of art in western Canada and in discovering new talent.

A.C. LEIGHTON

[Unidentified Clipping, Crabb Collection.]

"A picture," wrote Delacroix, "is nothing but a bridge between the soul of the artist and that of the spectator." When I pass along the bridges built by

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A.C. Leighton I feel convinced that they are ultimate perfection, particularly when they are built in water-colour and truly laid upon the toned French paper which he loves. I have the same feeling when I contemplate the work of Carmichael, or Brigden, or Casson, though their bridges span a different stream. It is a matter of personality combined with a finished technique.

The other morning I spent a splendid hour looking over a large number of water-colours and some few oils, the work of A.C. Leighton.... The collection is comprehensive and covers practically the whole period of his painting. Here are English pastorals, village scenes, windmills, hob-nobbing Canadian prairie and mountain views. The last-the Rocky Mountain subjects-predominate. Since he first came to Canada Leighton has been obsessed by the grandeur of the peaks. He deliberately chose Calgary as his home, and he built a house on the Carcee Trail in clear sight of the range. He kept horses for the sole purpose of transporting his supplies on sketching expeditions.

The amount of work he has produced is enormous. It continues to fill me with admiration, and, as I have said, with the conviction that it is completely satisfying and unique. It is unique because it is individual; it reflects a positive, attractive personality....

It may seem ambiguous to describe Leighton's work as at once individual and traditional. But so it is. He follows the pen-and-wash practice of Paul Sandby, or, even more sedulously, the pure wash method of Peter de Wint. His products are justly described by the forgotten phrase-"Water-colour drawings:" Yet there is nothing archaic or derivative about them; Leighton has made the style his own. His pictures moreover, reveal the man. The dignity and repose he finds in tree, house, or mountain is a reflection of that of his own nature; the simplicity and directness with which he limns his forms in his own honesty; the rich, somewhat sombre colour that goes to embellish them indicates the thoughtful mind.

This is a very rough analysis; an exposition of the full revelation would be tedious both to read and to write. I must, however, insist upon the perfection of Leighton's skill in the science of picture-making-his sound draughtsmanship, his impeccable arrangements, and the quality of his colour. He has long passed the point when consideration, or uncertainty, or any hesitation, disturbs the vigor of his expression. Manner and method have become instinctive with him. He is a master of his medium.

The misconception that to be modern or progressive in art, one must depart from tradition, or entirely ignoring it, start again from "scratch,"

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is prevalent among art students of today. Leighton and the Canadian water-colour painters prove its falsity whenever they paint, for they all follow the traditional methods of the English water-colour school. Whether they are cramping their respective styles by needless limitation is another argument, but one which is also answered by their work....

GUS KENDERDINE

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 7 May 1927.]

Gus Kenderdine is an Englishman who abandoned a promising career as an artist some seventeen years ago to farm in Saskatchewan. Efficiently trained in his own country, and at Julian's in Paris, he reached the point where public galleries were aware of his work and anxious to acquire it. The Municipal Gallery of Manchester-one of the finest in England-and one other at least, possess examples. Many a young artist would consider his fortune made had such early honors come his way, but the fact that Kenderdine deliberately abandoned his connections to work out his own artistic salvation on the prairies, suggests that he has retained a becoming modesty....

A few of Kenderdine's pictures impress one as conventional, though charming, compositions, not essentially suggestive of the prairies, but his canvas *A Day in Summer* proves beyond dispute that tradition, which Mr. Housser condemns with such insistence, has not prevented him from achieving what might be termed a thoroughly indigenous work of art. It breathes the very essence of peace. It is a simple subject-a blue sky flecked with summer clouds, a rolling plain below and in the distance a lake with a surface like glass....

CARL RUNGUIS

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, ca. 1933; undated; ca. 1933.]

Certain emigre artists in the West, for various reasons, have not been recognized so readily by our governing bodies in art.... Many years ago Carl Runguis built himself a home and studio in Banff so that he had a convenient base for his work in the Rockies. He is a painter of wild animals and of mountain landscape and virtually all his material has been garnered in Canada in twenty-three years' intensive study. He is the most popular painter of his type in America; he is a member of the

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National Academy, the highest honor in art it is possible to attain in that country-yet only one picture of his has ever been shown in Canada east or west of Calgary. Carl Runguis is a modest man. I suppose he would be called a poor salesman. His dealer in New York attends to the disposal of his pictures. I imagine it has never occurred to him to send to our larger exhibitions and certainly he has never been invited. Consequently although his art is essentially Canadian in subject and spirit, it is almost unknown in the country. Other than Arthur Heming we have no painter of wild animals; thus Runguis' work would be a distinct acquisition to our representative exhibitions....

I have known Runguis for many years and spent some time with him in Banff. He has two large canvases under way. One represents a grizzly approaching the spectator on a mountain side. The setting is wild in the extreme and typical of our mountains. Depicted in the foreground on the second canvas is an elk, also in mountain setting. The handling always is vigorous and the effect brilliant. The artist is a noted hunter and makes all his studies of animals on his hunting trips.

In his youth he gained a preliminary knowledge of animal anatomy by sketching in the zoo at Berlin, but he has told me that wild animals in captivity are too restless to be useful as models. To make a drawing of a grizzly at close range-such as that on which he is at present engaged -must require courage. Paul Kane almost regretted sketching a wounded buffalo, but a grizzly, one imagines, would be a far more terrifying model. His savage temper, of course, is not a permanent state of mind. He must have his benign moments and, like all animals, an enquiring eye-an attitude of curiosity towards an intruder which induces a watchful immobility. Arthur Heming tells of walking down a glacier in company with a grizzly.

Runguis gathers much of his material in the fall, and goes then on his hunting trips, though he does not carry a rifle. It does require nerve to stand up to an approaching grizzly with only a camera or a pencil in one's hands. His companions, however, shoot, and Runguis makes careful studies of the dead game both in colour and line. His pencil studies of detail-joints, hoofs, heads and so on, prove him to be a conscientious student and help to explain his mastery of the art of animal painting....

Runguis has a very fine painting of Lake McArthur to his credit which gained for him an important exhibition prize in the United States. He considers that lake the most beautiful in the Rockies, and that neighborhood which centres around Lake O'Hara the richest in fine scenery. He knows most of our eastern painters who have struggled pictorially with the mountains, and he

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has a great admiration for the work of the late J.E.H. MacDonald and Kenneth Forbes....

The paintings of Carl Runguis without doubt would add interest to our national exhibitions, if only by virtue of the fact that they illustrate a phase of the Canadian scene which has been somewhat neglected.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ART

[Vancouver Province, 4 April 1936; *The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 4 August 1934; *The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 19 September 1931.]

It is inevitable that Vancouver will become a city wherein art is widely practiced and appreciated. It is a city to attract painters, the splendor and variety of nature is there so lavishly displayed-it ranks indeed with Rio and Cape Town in the magnificence of its setting. The artist need never lack inspiration. Subjects challenge his attention at every step, and the passage of the sun and changes in the sky multiply each one of them. Near inlets are a source of perpetual delight. The cosmopolitan character of life on the coast is intriguing-the Chinese quarter of the city, Japanese fishing villages on the outskirts, and Indian villages a little way north complete with community houses and totem poles. In the harbor ships of all nations come and go.

Few of the artists now working at the Coast regard Indian life or Indian monuments as agreeable subjects for their brushes. But Emily Carr, who was born and still lives in Victoria, has devoted much of her time to such themes and in her quest for material among the tribes has suffered much hardship and discomfort....

Charles H. Scott has long exercised a strong influence on the art in Vancouver. Years ago he achieved success with a series of etchings; latterly he has used the oil medium exclusively-save for a group of pen drawings published two years ago-deriving his subject matter from the harbor and the gardens of the city. Until Scott engaged F.H. Varley as an assistant at the Art School, art in the city may be said to have been strictly academic.

Varley was one of the original Group of Seven. He painted a number of successful pictures in France for the Canadian War Records. Turning to landscape-as befitted a descendant of the renowned John Varley-he produced many fine and thoughtful canvases such as the *Georgian Bay*, owned by the National Gallery. Following this he painted the Massey family, individually, and portraits of Dr. Henry Marshall Tory, then president of University of Alberta, and Dr. Daniel McIntyre of Winnipeg.

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As a colourist Varley has no peer in Canada. Always an unconventional painter, latterly he has sought to rend the veil of appearances and reveal for us spiritual as well as material beauty. His *Dharana*⁵ I regard as a Canadian masterpiece.... The paint-quality, which is easy to perceive but almost impossible to describe, is a delight. Who the lady depicted may be, whether a modern Andromeda, or the lamented victim of the Sands of Dee, or why or what I do not know. It is immaterial. The colour, shimmering light, and the sheer competence of the painting satisfy me completely.

Varley's present associate, J. W. G. Macdonald, is a landscape painter. *Black Tusk*⁶ is the best work I have seen of his—a fine composition whose interest owes more to pictorial qualities—that is, to pattern and colour—than to objective truth. W. P. Weston cannot be overlooked. Apart from his influence as a teacher—he has been, for more than twenty years, art master at the Provincial Normal School—he has shown a consistent interest in landscape and has produced some very interesting works, highly stylized....

The art gallery was built this year on Georgia street. The city provided the site and I think might have been a trifle more generous. The building—designed by Sharp and Thompson—is constructed of concrete and is modern in style All that is visible of the exterior is the white facade embellished with stone carvings by Carlos Marega,⁷ a sculptor who has done a great deal of excellent work for Vancouver. Inside are two large galleries, a sculpture court, two water-colour rooms, a print-room, a board-room, and the usual offices—that is, on the ground floor. Upstairs there is a fine lecture-room and a room intended for the use of local art societies.

Mr. H. A. Stone, the founder of the Gallery, went to Europe during the summer on a buying expedition, Charles H. Scott went with him. That is significant. Scott is an artist, at present head of the local art school. I know of more than one community on the continent that scorns to seek professional advice in buying and relies on “business” men with appalling results. The Vancouver expedition was a pronounced success.... It was intended that the pictures forming the nucleus of the collection should show, as far as possible, the progress of painting in Great Britain, both in oils and water-colours and that they should be also works of outstanding merit. Most painters have painted some bad pictures. These should not be hung in galleries, but they are when the name is big enough. Scott's knowledge enabled Vancouver to avoid this snag.

Canadian work will be bought from future exhibitions. I believe it is intended to emphasize this section. There is plenty of time, so far as



Untitled, n.d., Wood engraving, 11.7 x 12.9 cm,
The Winnipeg Art Gallery.

living artists are concerned, but the work of Tom Thomson, Krieghoff, Jacobi, Blair Bruce, Peel and Fraser is hard to come by now and time probably will not improve this condition....

THOMAS FRIPP

[The *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 6 June 1931; 18 September 1926.]

If Thomas Fripp had remained in the East or in London he would have fared differently. There would have unfolded before him the pageant of art, reflecting ephemeral tastes, new essays in technique, new theories of art, even new standards of beauty. The friendship and society of fellow artists, hard to forego, would have remained possible. The imminence of new thought would have been apparent in those circumstances, and his work would have responded to its influence.

As it was progressive thought passed him by; there was no other with whom to discuss his problems; there were not paintings to study, to admire and emulate, or revile. He lived within himself and his artistic ideals were those that thrived in St. John's Wood in his youth. He was a later survivor of the eighties and the early nineties. Unhappily the vain and opinionated young Raphaels, in power in the East, scorned his water-colours, and regarded them as belonging to another age and generation. Thus Fripp was deprived of the honors that might justly have been his -membership in Canadian societies (as distinct from provincial societies). Personally I have no regrets in this matter, having made repeated and sincere efforts to secure his invitation to membership in the Canadian society that chiefly interested him. He was too gentle and modest to be greatly grieved by neglect, however, and he was happy enough, if cramped, in the niche he had built himself. ...

Painting to Thomas Fripp was an hereditary disease. His father was George A. Fripp, of the Royal Water-colour Society, a painter of distinction in his day and a friend of Du Maurier and Millais. I was regaled one afternoon in Vancouver recently by Fripp's reminiscences relating to London studio life in those days. He produced contemporary paintings of great interest. Those by his father were especially interesting-a little faded as to colour, but rich in the essential features of arrangement and drawing. His uncle A.D. Fripp, was also a member of the Royal Water-colour Society, whilst a brother, Charles S. Fripp, the famous war correspondent, was an associate. I know of few other instances where art inspired so many members of one family.

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Thomas Fripp studied at the St. John's Wood Art School, and later, after a year in Italy, at the Royal Academy Schools. His father instructed him in the technique of water-colour. He was well equipped when he came to Canada and though he had to wrest a living from the land during his first six or eight years here, he still painted. It was probably with feelings of relief that he found himself obliged to abandon farming and to move to Vancouver. Wielding a hoe with a bunch of Chinamen, as he said, may be a good introduction to colonial life, but it offers little balm to an artist's soul. Two years in a photographer's studio and a period of attempt to imbue inadequate minds with the rudiments of art could not have been much more inspirational than hoeing. He came through it all with his malady-painting-still chronic and with the growth of the city found patrons with an eye for a good picture and money to buy one. Happy man! Some of the provincial governments are among his patrons and he has won fame in the West. That he has not yet been honored by the eastern Societies-though his work may be seen periodically in their exhibitions-is a matter of regret, but one which still may be rectified.

He works wholly in water-colour and finds his subjects in the country around Vancouver and in the Rocky Mountains. His mountain pictures are most familiar to me and of them I delight chiefly in his gray effects - opalescent, delicate harmonies, envisaging the glories of gray. He is unaffected by the many modern variants of water-colour technique and abides by the traditional methods of the English school. In this he is almost a group of one and may possibly be regarded as too reactionary by the established groups further east....

CHARLES JOHN COLLINGS

[*"Wet Paint,"* 72-76.]

In view of the long and vigorous practice of the art of water-colour, it is only reasonable to suppose that every possible method of handling has been exploited long since. But in 1912 Mr. Collings proved to the satisfaction of the London critics that such a supposition was mistaken....

A new revelation comes but seldom. Many of us, alas, add nothing to the sum of the knowledge of beauty, but Mr. Collings shows there is much behind and beyond the ordinary vision, not expressed by abstractions, but by colour and form related to nature. He depicts majestic peaks silhouetted against the sun or in a blaze of light, or wrapped in mist, wreathed with clouds, in the mystery of

half-light, enveloped in snow, in all conditions, and placid lakes that mirror them. He invests forests, waterfalls, hillsides, burned timber lands, with a strange and compelling interest, converting them into fantasies whose variety has no limits, and whose colour displays a magnificence that suggests another world, if it be not a new vision in this. If the beauty in nature is merely a reflection of that in the mind, Mr. Collings will ever be appreciated by thoughtful people conscious of its many manifestations.

Charles John Collings was born in Devon and trained for the law. Determined to paint, he sought lessons from N.J. Baird, who, in a very short time, confessed that he could teach him no more. Mr. Collings exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1887 to 1896 then he sent instead to the International Society of Sculptors, Engravers and Painters. Since 1900, in spite of the praise bestowed by the newspapers and art journals, the public has had few opportunities of seeing his work save in one-man shows. In 1910 he left England and sought a retreat in the wilderness, amid the mountains. He set up his tent in the deep snow that winter, thirty-five miles from Sicamous, on Shuswap Lake. The next year he began to build a house on this site, and this is now far more comfortable than its remoteness would suggest. His wild surroundings minister to the needs of his brush and it may have helped to determine his final method of expression...

His method may be explained in a few words. He soaks a sheet of hot-pressed, that is, smooth paper, for a day or two, and, ready to paint, lays it on a sheet of slate or glass (latterly he has used a slab of cork), in order to conserve its moisture. He paints with pure pigments of full intensity, mixing them only on the paper, and removes any superfluity, or reduces intensities, with a clean brush. Certain passages would seem to indicate the admixture of paste, but he does not use it. The masses of floating colour, where they meet and combine, often create forms and hues of great beauty, fortuitous perhaps, but coherent when manipulated by an artist like Mr. Collings. The painting is finished by the time the paper dries, when, formerly, it was burnished to increase its brilliance.

Instead of building up form with superimposed colour, or even of defining form with brush strokes, he achieves all his middle and higher tones by lifting the pigment which is floated all over the paper in the earlier stages of painting. There is practically no evidence of dry painting in any of his work, no dry accents, or hard edges. His colour is diffused in soft and graceful effects, and has, on occasion, the purity and brilliance of opal, or the richness of agate. Passages of tender green and rose,

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within a setting of pearly grays, have all the quality of jewels. Always the elaboration of a natural theme, his colour is a transmuted and extended harmony, a symphony in pigment.

All the painting is done within doors. A pencil drawing that embraces the facets of a landscape, and suggests an adequate arrangement, is all that he needs. Thus his imagination has free rein, unhampered by masses of detail in tone and colour. These drawings are interesting in them-selves, vigorous and direct.

Mr. Collings makes good use of black pigment in mixtures, especially grays. For the rest, his palette is one that any water-colourist might use. He does not use colours that spread unevenly, such as French ultramarine or cerulein blue, out of regard for surface quality...

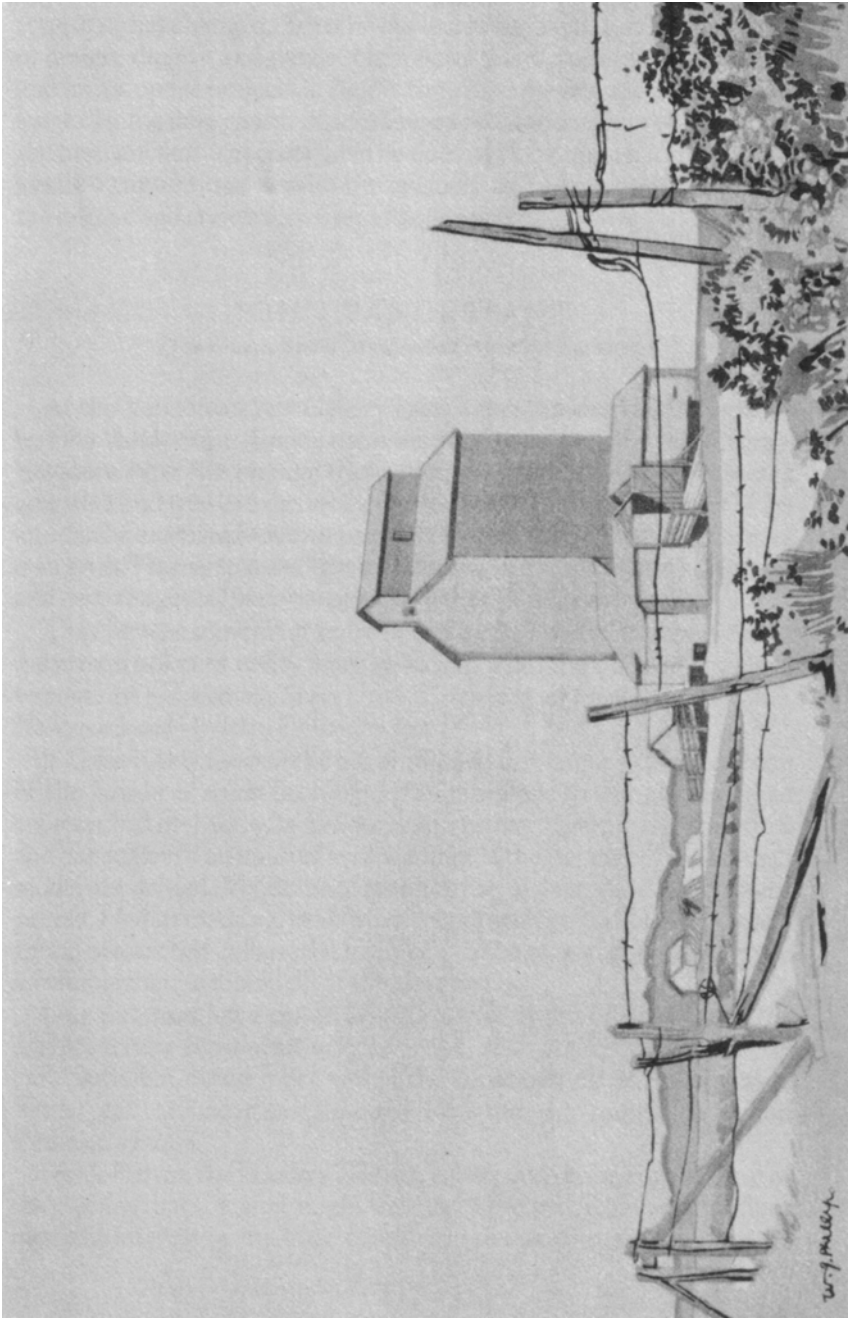
An artist leans more on the perception and expression of beauty in colour as he grows older. Such is Mr. Collings. At eighty he is producing pictures which manifest as much if not more enthusiasm, freshness of conception, and skill, than ever before. His vigorous virtuosity was never more apparent, nor the remarkable quality of technical perfection that his small paintings have always displayed. I saw him last in 1928. He was on his way to Banff to get some snow studies, virile and eager as a youth. He was smoking a brand of tobacco far too strong for my taste, and spoke of teaching the hotel chef how to make welsh rarebit, which he liked to eat before retiring. The years have passed him by lightly.

CHARLES H. SCOTT

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated.]

C.H. Scott is the director of the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Art. In fact the school has had no other director,⁹ and its remarkable success may be credited justly to his account. C.H. Scott "did his bit" in the Great War. Before that he was art supervisor in the Calgary schools. His education in art was acquired in the Glasgow school under Maurice Greiffenhagen.

Teaching is interesting, but it cannot satisfy the creative instinct of an artist. His dreams and conceptions demand instant expression. As with the rest of us, so with Scott; he has always made pictures. Years ago he produced a series of etchings, which, had they been better known in the East, would have established his reputation immediately. His water-colours, had they been exhibited, would have been no less helpful. But his etching needle has rusted with disuse, and his water-colours are dry and abandoned. Practically the



Prairie Elevator, 1943, Colour woodcut on Japan paper, 21.3 x 32.9 cm,
The National Gallery of Canada.

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whole of his output now is in oils. His style, too, has changed. What he has lost in verisimilitude he has gained in design, dignity and power. He follows the dictum of the patternist and builds up his projects in rigidly simplified masses. He is seduced no longer by the false charm of accidental appearances. Expressing chiefly the fundamental aspects of form he does not look upon nature with the eye of a camera that is, with the eye only and a blank mind, but with the critical and constructive regard of an artist....

JOHN VANDERPANT

[*The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, undated, 6 June 1935; undated.]

At the Vancouver Art Gallery I saw a fine showing of photographs by John Vanderpant. Among them were eighteen camera studies of grain elevators. Now the average trade photographs of these bare masses of concrete and iron are distinctly depressing from the standpoint of art and can be examined without pain only by their owners. But Vanderpant is an artist. He manipulates light and shadow with assurance of knowledge and he arranges his pictorial parts with the eye of a painter.

That he sees something more in these vast unvarnished bins than a mere expression of utility, may be judged from the titles he has given to some of his studies: Snow Castle, Colonnades of Commerce, Cylinders, Horizontals and Uprights, Elevator Pattern.

In Colonnades of Commerce he has produced what might well be a portion of the facade of some Brobdignagian temple with smooth, engaged columns half in shadow. In Elevator Pattern he has turned his lens upwards and has achieved an unusual arrangement in the manner of the defunct modernist school. Vanderpant, as an artist, is an apostle of the unexpected. He has made agreeable pictures of such impossible objects as a group of starched collars, the heart of a cabbage, and doorsteps. It was inevitable that he should tilt at the elevator.

Our painters have made tentative tilts at grain elevators. Our architects are somewhat unconcerned, such structures lacking all embellishment, being more within the consciousness of the engineer. Yet in part, or under certain conditions, they are monumental, and thus picturesque....

Frank Rutter the London Times art critic, said of the composition of these prints that Cezanne might well have been proud of them. He finds pictorial interest in the little considered details of nature-in a single spray of blossom,

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tracks in the snow; in the flight of gulls, in shadows on the ground. He never fakes his effects nor messes with gum prints. John Vanderpant's success as a "pictorialist," as he terms it, evidently lies mainly in a wakeful eye; he is ever on the watch for the perfect conjunction of the essential elements of time, place, and condition, that results in a pictorial subject. ... Denied the force and beauty of colour he plays like a master on black and white notes, and on the gamut of grays between these extremes; he is as wise in the use of line and mass, balance and contrast and proportion, as a painter.

EMILY CARR

[The *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 20 December 1941.]

Two or three years ago three of Emily Carr's paintings were shown at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in an exhibition of Western Canadian art. They were rhythmic interpretations of the green forests of the Pacific coast, and of unique native villages built between the forest and the sea, painted in oils, but unconventionally-the pigment liquified and laid on in washes like water-colour. Painted at an age when you might expect the artist's style to be set, the experimental technique and fresh outlook embodied in these works seemed to indicate that she still retains the zest of youth and the beholder was convinced that he had encountered an interesting personality. But with or without this enticement many will want to read Emily Carr's first book, *Klee Wyck*,¹⁰ for few Canadian books have been better advertised.

While Emily Carr's paintings record her visual impressions of nature, *Klee Wyck* describes its impact upon all her senses. You can't paint the thunderous sound of waves breaking upon the shore; nor the smell of skunk cabbage, nor the fears of night in the forest. Emily Carr is extra-ordinarily sensitive and has the knack of endowing her words with authentic meaning and her narrative with the illusion of reality. She recreates her experiences in such a manner that the reader shares them with her, partaking of her distress in a rough sea, her discomfort in a drenching rain, or her joy in beauty. This somewhat uncommon faculty is the writer's chief virtue.

Klee Wyck is formless-a mere hotch-potch of brief essays connected only by the thread of personality. The author tells us nothing about her painting, except that she goes out to sketch and returns and that she carries a "sketch-sack" habitually. She offers no opinion nor does she attempt to instruct.

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The essay entitled "D'Sonoqua"-unfortunately too closely woven to quote-is typical and enshrines the charm, the very spirit, of the romantic land of which she writes. D'Sonoqua-"the wild woman of the woods"-whose colossal effigy is often encountered near a village, deserves a special chapter. She stands on a book-case in my studio, carved for me (in miniature) by Yakuglas.¹¹

Perhaps I derive pleasure from this artless yet convincing prose because I know something of the remote Indian villages which the author describes. I have followed blazed trails through the forest alone. I have talked with the Indian, made pictures of his totem poles, and navigated his tippy canoe. And so these essays recall the joys and sorrows of many sketching trips along the north-west coast. As I read, I quail again at the sudden sight of horrendous figures looming through the mist; I feel the loneliness of deserted winter villages and sense the beauty of the mountains and the smell of the sea. To those who cannot respond with such completeness *Klee Wyck* may not prove so interesting, yet they will find in its author a pleasant companion, a sympathetic, unassuming, understanding lady with whom to make these journeys for the first time.

The totem pole has always seemed to me a manifestation of art rather than of heathenism and it pains me that so many of my countrymen regard it with distaste. Emily Carr made her longest trips solely to see fine poles she had heard of and to make sketches of them.

WEST COAST INDIAN ART

[The *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 16 July 1927;
"Aboriginal Art," *The Beaver*, No. 268 (September 1937),40-4.]

The hours that are added to one's span of life on the journey to the west coast I dissipated in a drive around Stanley Park. It was a sight-seeing bus, provided with a guide and megaphone. The guide stopped us in front of the totem poles and delivered a portentous lecture upon them. Now the totems were of great interest to me as examples of a primitive art and I wept when he said that the method of making them was lost in the mists of antiquity. But I determined to learn more about them....

I cannot discuss the significance of Indian design in general, but I can testify to the beauty of examples I have seen-of splendid embroidery wrought of dyed porcupine quills, of gracefully carved pipe-stone and wonderful weaving, and I know that the wood sculpture of the west

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coast tribes is not necessarily crude, repulsive and demonic, as is often suggested, but fine, honest purposeful decoration.

West coast carving has always attracted me for a number of reasons and I cannot understand the common remark: "I don't like totem poles;" nor the shudder that usually accompanies it. I see so much humor in them-that rare but precious quality in art, of naivete, exotic charm and of bold design, that I shall never understand that attitude.

Siwash art is conventional and emblematic, rather than representational, and as such is more closely allied to some modern than to academic art. Its conventions are largely imposed by the shape of the cedar log and by their simple carving tools-the adze and the knife-which explains also its superficial resemblance to Polynesian art. Let these detractors lavish admiration upon the beadwork which I despise, for it is an alien art, or better still, let them study the poles, and meet Yakuglas, a mild-mannered gentleman whose mission in life is to make them.

Yakuglas belongs to the Kwakiutl tribe, which inhabits the northeast corner of Vancouver Island and a strip of the adjacent mainland. The art of this people was as it should be applied to life. All that was made or used was rendered pleasing to the eye. I have to use the past tense. Unfortunately the Indian has now adopted the sophisticated yet artless ways of the white; he has exchanged beauty and simplicity for standardized, machine-made comfort.

Neither the birch-bark canoe, nor the Venetian gondola, nor any other small craft, equals the Kwakiutl canoe in sheer beauty of shape and line, but I doubt whether those that are lost through misadventure are ever replaced. The basketry of this tribe is much sought after, but vainly now; their handsome carved oil bowls have no further use, for I fancy the Kwakiutl brave eats porridge from a plate, and is far too nice to dip into the communal tank for a helping of oolichan oil and its floating crust of salmon berries. Masks and rattles have been abandoned for photographic enlargements and gramophones; totem poles have fulfilled their period of usefulness, and lie and rot where they fall like cankered trees or, in the more accessible villages, they suffer a shameful rejuvenation, being garnished with house paint and firmly set in bases of concrete for tourists to gape at.

It is sad, perhaps that Kwakiutl art should have been vested solely in perishable substances for it is fine in its way and unique. On the other hand, perhaps it is as well. The Greeks vaingloriously embodied their conceptions of beauty in enduring marble, as though any human thought was worth it and today our architects, sculptors, painters and draughts-

men are forced to defer their alleged inspiration supremacy. It is a poor town that fails to boast of an imitation Greek temple, a poor artist who refuses to admit his relative ineptitude....

Yakuglas still makes totem poles and does not place too great a reliance on modern time-saving tools and devices. I met him quite by accident on a log-littered, pebble-strewn beach on the west coast. He is, of course, a slave to convention, although conditions admit of a certain amount of freedom. He was carving a pole for a storekeeper in a southern town, to be used like a barber's pole for a sign. His symbols could have no particular significance. What could it matter to the storekeeper whether his pole was crested with a hoh-hok,¹² a thunderbird, or a raven?

Yakuglas had selected a derelict cedar log, and worked on it where it lay. The sun was strong, so he worked in the shade of a strip of canvas put up like an awning. There he sat astride the log, hacking away not too assiduously with an adze, and chewing gum. His world was a pleasant place. He looked very happy.... He welcomed me with a broad grin and, although his English was halting, we spent a good day in talk.

I expressed concern as to the future of his art. Would its traditions die with him? He had trained his son, he replied, in the mysteries of local totemism and in the craft of carving, but the youth had gone to Victoria far to the south, swapping a noble profession for what was, I am sure, a menial job. He looked soberly across the channel as he spoke to the snow-capped mountains beyond as though he perceived and regretted the passing of the old things, of all the picturesque customs and rituals and various manifestations of the tribal spirit....

It is impossible to discuss the significance of all the strange forms that comprise a pole—they are innumerable, but many are recognizable. The bear, the whale, the dog and the eagle appear constantly, but necessarily distorted in scale and attitude to fit the contours of the log upon which they are carved. Thus a Brobdingnagian kingfisher perches on the flukes of a Lilliputian whale whose pose is obviously acrobatic and it may in turn be balanced on the head of a wolf. But each device has some bearing on the pedigree or the achievements of the man whom it commemorates. The pole may be described as heraldic.

I was more interested in Yakuglas as a craftsman, however, than as an interpreter of myths or as a blazoner of the badges of tribal chieftains. He worked whilst he talked and I had ample opportunity for observing his methods. He used two tools mostly, an adze for shaping, and a long blade, handled as a cooper handles a drawing knife for finishing and he owned a chisel and a gouge. He used the chisel for

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making slots to take the spreading wings of the thunder-bird which would top the pole; these and such other protruberances as would exceed the capacity of the log he fashioned separately.

When he had finished carving the pole, he would, he said, paint it, most likely with house paint, although that does not accord with traditional practice. The native method of preparing pigments was a troublesome one. Salmon eggs chewed with cedar bark was the agglutinant with which the pigments were ground. Stone pestles and mortars were used. Coal made a good strong black. Yellow, brown and red earth (ochre), cinnabar, berry juice, spruce sap yielded attractive colours, and fungus from the hemlock gave them an alternative range-yellow when it was decayed and desiccated, red when roasted, black when charred. Native paint has a more agreeable surface texture than house paint, but it must be a grief to prepare.

The erection of the pole presents few difficulties, but the job must be done well, for when the pole falls it is left to rot where it lies. There was a magnificent effigy of a thunder-bird surmounting a grave at Alert Bay. I made a drawing of it. A few years later I passed that way again and saw it prone, its proud beak half buried in the soil and there it still lies unless it has been chopped up to feed a fire. Sometimes when a pole begins to lean it is propped up, but otherwise no care is taken of them.

Yakuglas told me all this and more. He took me into his workshop. There he makes miniature poles and other carvings that sell readily to tourists. I asked him to make a pair for me. These were later delivered to the Indian agent and mailed to my home; they grace the mantelshelf, constantly reminding me of the pleasant day I spent with the artist. Afterwards he sent me a model of a dugout canoe equipped with paddles, seal spear, and, for good measure, a symbolic seal for spearing. To be accurate, only one of the carvings is a pole; the other Yakuglas described as a Zunuk, a weird and wonderful figure with a mouth extending to the nape of the neck. The mouth seems to have a peculiar fascination for the Kwakiutl; often the entrance of a community house was the mouth of some carved creature comprising the lower part of the lodge pole. Zunuks always seem to have been equipped with mouths like this; they were made for festive occasions-the name might be translated as clown-and with help may have protruded and retracted a wagging tongue for the amusement of the assembled tribe; or puffed out smoke and flames to the same end. I came across one or two large specimens.

A further type of wood sculpture is presented by house posts. These in pairs supported the huge fluted rafters of the community house and

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were either single figures or simple groups varying from ten to fifteen feet in height.

Few poles remain in Alert Bay. The finest, forty feet high, was moved to Stanley Park in Vancouver and as one of a group of four, two of which are house posts, is accessible to students and sightseers. Yakuglas said he carved three of these, though in a brochure describing the group the Reverend John C. Goodfellow does not identify any carver with any one of them.¹³ In the long street of the native village there are two splendid house posts and one decaying pole and in the grave-yard there are half a dozen or so in good shape. But the display there is disappointing, though the town itself, in its character as the Papeete of the North Pacific, is interesting enough....



ART OF

THE WOOD-CUT

HISTORY OF THE WOOD-CUT

[“Wood-Cut and Wood-Engravings,” typescript, Crabb Collection, 1-2, 6-7,10-11, 19-23.]

IN THE MIDDLE AGES when illiteracy was the rule rather than the exception, pictures-paintings first and then prints-were the poor man’s Bible. Later on prints became the poor man’s art. Artists have always tried to invent new methods of reproducing drawings and paintings, not, I am sure, with any altruistic desire to satisfy the aesthetic needs of the poor, but to capture a new market....

In Duerer’s time prints were made from both wood and metal, representing what are still the two main types of prints, namely cameo and intaglio. In wood the printing surface is raised, like a cameo ...and the portions cut away correspond to the negative or white portions of the finished print. It is impossible to say which material has the best claim to antiquity.

I think wood is the more sympathetic and the more interesting. It has a vitality which metal lacks: it expands and shrinks, warps and cracks, its grain often presents problems to the craftsman, yet it responds to the most extraordinary demands made by a skilled manipulator. Of all the products of the earth the tree has been the most useful to man. It is capable of satisfying all his needs. Not of course in Canada, but even here it is remarkable what has been done with wood without the aid of metal. Red River carts were constructed entirely of wood, without nails or bolts or tires. The West Coast

Indian produced wood-sculptures with a bone knife and an adze made of beaver's teeth. The instinct to work with wood is innate.

Fundamentally the making of a wood-cut is exceedingly simple. I knew a man who lived in a caravan, who picked up his wood on the road, used his pocket-knife as an engraving tool, used shoe-polish for printing-ink, wrapping paper to print on, and who produced his proofs by hand-rubbing....

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The earliest known wood-cut, an illustration of the legend of St. Christopher, is preserved in the Rylands Library in Manchester. It represents the only distinction achieved by native English art in mediaeval times. It was discovered in the covers of an old manuscript. The beginnings of the craft are shrouded in mystery. It is said that the practice was known in 1406. Initial letters were certainly so printed in 1400. Pear wood probably was used. A hard wood it must have been, for innumerable impressions were taken from these old blocks. A knife and gouges were the instruments employed for cutting away the white spaces between the lines....

At the end of the eighteenth century some bright fellow whose name is forgotten thought to adapt the burin of the metal engraver for use with wood. It is a small, square or lozenge-shaped bar of steel from four to six inches long with the end cut obliquely. It has a ball shaped handle of wood which fits into the palm of the hand and enables the tool to be pushed along the surface to be engraved, making a furrow like a plough makes in a field. Obviously such a tool could not be used with wood cut plank-wise, which it would tear rather than cut, but it was found that a disc sawn off the end of a log, transversely like a slice of Bologna sausage, provided a surface that yields to the burin as smoothly as butter to a hot knife.... The adoption of the graver made possible the suggestion of tone gradations and all kinds of textures. Inevitably the wood-engraver was immediately occupied in reproducing paintings and wash-drawings, and he persisted until the half-tone photo-engraving process came into being....

At approximately the same time as the knife was discarded in favor of the graver in Europe, Moronobu, the embroiderer, was producing the first broad-sheets known in Japan and from that time until now the tradition of the wood-cut, as distinct from the wood-engraving, was preserved and augmented in that country. Some authorities claim that the craft was derived from European practice in the seventeenth century, thus the tradition was unbroken. Whether that speculation is correct or not it is a fact that no art was ever so national, so unique and so economically developed as that of the Japanese wood-cut. It has all the quality of a thoroughly indigenous art. Consider the materials used. The mountain cherry, growing only in the highlands of Japan, provides a wood more admirably suited than any other for the purpose. The long-fibred paper, hand-made by peasants, is now used universally as the best possible variety for hand-printing. The brushes used for inking the blocks are unsurpassed—they are made

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of horse hair tied with silk and fastened with twine in a split wooden handle. The baren, frotton, or pad, used for rubbing up an impression, has an essential covering of bamboo leaf. Nothing approaches this ribbed surface in absolute fitness, and many things have been tried, including sharkskin and glass....

The addition of colour to the wood-cut was inevitable Many of the early wood-cuts were coloured by hand, a proceeding now regarded as analogous to painting the lily....

The Japanese print has a unique place in art. Its influence on western painting has been very important There is little or no painting done today which does not bear in some degree the stamp of Nippon. When Whistler's slight but graceful art began to offend the eyes of Mr. Ruskin and his contemporaries, European painting was distinctly heavy, in colour, structure, theme, and overloaded with detail. All of it in oriental eyes, if not in ours, was hopelessly objective or representational. The art of Japan displays the very opposite spirit, being imbued with delicacy and grace, lightness and simplicity.

In 1856 or 1857 Claude Monet watched a Zaandam grocer wrapping up his butter and cheese in Japanese prints. He put an end to this astonishing but unconscious vandalism by buying the whole bundle. He showed these dainty trifles to Degas and to Whistler, whose interest was soon converted into enthusiasm, and the three artists immediately sought to incorporate in their work some of the exotic beauty so strangely manifested. Whistler was unsuccessful in his first effort, in reproducing the spirit of the print.... The later portraits... might have been designed by the great Hokusai himself. Here is a greater simplicity and breadth. In the landscapes Whistler tinctures the European stock with an essence distilled from the Japanese print. The *Nocturne in Blue and Silver, No. i* is indeed more Oriental than European. The signature and the spray of foliage, at the base of the canvas are shameless imitations of the calligraphic brushwork of the Nipponese painters....

The Canadian painter J.W. Morrice was one of those who carried on the direct Whistler-cum Japanese traditions, but the indirect influence has been widespread. There have been few artists since Whistler's death who have failed to borrow some of his grace and lightness....

It is at first difficult to appreciate how the gay and airy genius of Japan could have any part in the production of such morbid, restless, yet moving works, as those produced by van Gogh. Yet the evidence is there and nothing could be plainer. During his excursions on foot in Paris van Gogh was accustomed to visit second-hand book-stalls, where he found a new treasure

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every day for twenty centimes. It was inevitable that he should find Japanese prints there too, and he bought these-not the finer specimens, but the cheaper and gaudier sort printed with any line colours from Germany-crude things compared with the best, but cheap and gay. So impressed was the artist with these amazing little works of art that he talked about them all the time and wrote to his brother Theo about them Eventually van Gogh produced many portraits under the influence. There are his several paintings of Pere Tanguay, who sold him his colours and his prints. In most of these the heavy outline appears, and the flat tone, each an individual characteristic of the wood-cut....

The European conception of balance in pictorial art, to put the matter briefly, has been changed, or rather enlarged. Formerly the massive pyramid was the device in composition most commonly employed. This is exceedingly heavy in effect-and might be described as earth-bound. Now the public as well as the painter appreciates the arrangements of Japan; the subtle spacing; the fragile balance; and the value of empty though justly proportioned spaces.

Many Canadian painters owe a debt to Japan. If Tom Thomson's pictures are examined in the light of these remarks, it must be conceded he is one of them. Truly Japan has been more than a mere prop for Impressionism.

THE WOOD-CUT REVIVAL

["Wood-Cut and Wood-Engravings," 8-9,23-25.]

It occurred to a few individuals that the medium itself-the craft of colour-printing from wood-blocks-was of interest. J.D. Batten and F Morley Fletcher were perhaps the first investigators. Wellesley Dow, of the United States, and Emil Orlik, of Prague, who actually went to Japan to study the craft, worked independently at about the same time, and Helen Hyde sailed for the Orient in 1899 also to receive instruction at first hand. A revival was under way.

Batten and Fletcher followed the Japanese tradition as well as they could, although it involved them in difficulties. They found there was no literature concerning the craft, except Tokuno's monograph' published by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington in 1892. They sought out a Japanese print-seller in London, who amplified Tokuno's descriptions. They finally employed a wall-paper block-cutter, which was an ingenious idea though it worked out unsatisfactorily.

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William Giles...attended one or two lectures by Fletcher at Reading, but this method of blind adherence to a craft indigenous to another land did not commend itself to his inventive and energetic nature. He made a few very successful prints from wood-blocks, and then perfected a method of printing from relief metal plates that had been tentatively considered by William Blake. He did a great deal to emancipate the western print-maker from the influence of Nippon by providing substitute tools and by abandoning the black line tradition....

The earliest product of the revival was *Eve and the Serpent* (1894-1895) the joint work of Batten, Fletcher, and the wall-paper man. A year later Fletcher cut out the blocks for Batten's print *The Harpies* and also made his own first original colour-print entitled *Meadowsweet*. Although identical as to method these early prints are distinctly western in motive and expression.

Helen Hyde strove to acquire the traditional technique more exactly, and extended her study to the use of the brush as practised by the Kano school. Many of her later designs were cut and printed by Japanese craftsmen, a fact revealed by the result. Bertha Lum, Elizabeth Keith, and Frank Bartlett, employed native craftsmen and their work possesses an exotic quality in consequence. The practice is uncommon now. The modern artist prefers to be his own craftsman, and achieves a unity never apparent in prints of mixed parentage....

The modern artist sees in wood-engraving a unique medium for personal expression. He was somewhat uncertain at first and impatient, and produced and published a mass of prints which were so roughly executed as to make a professional engraver froth at the mouth.... Now he has acquired adequate skill. ... The modern engraving ... has rediscovered simplicity in its relation to black and white masses. He often displays a preference for texture over tone and uses only as much light and shade as suits him. No black is so rich and fat as the black of a wood-cut, and no white is so pure. For graphic boldness, directness and simplicity the wood-cut is supreme....

APPRENTICESHIP

[“The Wood-Cut in Colour,” *Canadian Art*, IV (March 1947),52-55; “Wood-Cut and Wood-Engravings,” 8-9,41 ; “Another Wood-Cut,” typescript, Crabb Collection, 6.]

The wood-cut in colour ... has peculiar beauties all its own. There is the surface texture-a unique sheen of colour comparable with that of

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a fresco painting. There is the smooth tone gradation, as perfect as if painted in water-colour and which can be reproduced by no other means. The shading of dark blue into light must be achieved otherwise by the juxtaposition of dots or lines. The wood-engraving shares this disability with the etching, the aquatint, the mezzotint and the half-tone. There are the sharply defined shapes and the variable lines, which confess their origin in the knife. And, equally characteristic and readily discerned, there is the pleasant impression of the wood's grain. The softer portions of the wood, which represent each a summer's growth, absorb and yield more pigment than the harder portions of the rings, and although a flat wash of colour is brushed over the whole surface of the block, these differences of density are clearly defined in the print. A practised eye will remark also the extreme brilliance and transparence of colour as transferred from wood to paper.

To adapt these unique properties of this delightful medium to design, is a technical problem which has held my interest for a number of years. I am still unsatisfied with the results, which is just as well; were it otherwise I should do no more.

Since boyhood my ambition was to make prints. I could handle those that came my way and examine them minutely and at leisure. Perhaps I was attracted by this intimacy. Painting seemed by comparison remote, well-nigh impossible of achievement, and cumbersome. There was a long period of probation, learning to draw, waiting for the impulse to give graphic expression to visual experiences, waiting for opportunity. I was thirty before I made my first prints and they were a series of etchings, landscapes and portraits. Cyril Barraud showed me how to make them. The details of the technique kept me interested for several months. I made my own ground and mixed my inks. I etched some portraits and landscapes and enjoyed it, but it did not hold my interest. It is likely that I missed colour. Had I persisted I might eventually have done something more satisfactory to myself in that medium, but I can honestly say I was disgusted. We lived on the prairies at that time, and it seemed to me that I had to collect my materials and tools from the ends of the earth.

The beautiful simplicity of the technique of wood-working dawned upon me one day. I planed a piece of cherry-wood and determined to make a print in colour. I had a sketch of a snow scene which I could visualize as a print simplified and pulled together. In a few days I had cut a key-block and three colours, hoping they would align themselves properly with the aid of a weird and clumsy contrivance that represented my conception of the

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Japanese method of registration and which is not worth description. I had never seen a Japanese block, nor a book describing one. I had access to no literature on the subject excepting a brief article in *The Studio*² by Allen Seaby, which actually told very little about the procedure. At this time F Morley Fletcher's book³ was not on the market, and I did not see it till ten years later. This contains an excellent account of the traditional technique of Japan. I expect I had more fun working things out my own way. The print maker works in the dark, seeing his results only after the last chip is brushed away and the last work printed, but I was blindfolded too. It was more interesting for that reason; I acquired the enthusiasm of a pioneer.

The cutting was very simple; it was even easy to rub rough impressions from the blocks and to align them correctly, but for a long time I failed to discover how to obtain a printed surface that in any way approached the beautiful texture of those I admired in Japanese prints. It was a question of paper. I tried every kind in sight: water-colour paper, super-fine writing paper, blotting paper, toilet paper. The results were diverse and deplorable. That satin-smooth surface was elusive, unattainable....

There was a soiled half-sheet of Japanese paper among my etching papers. I damped that in desperation. Glory! It worked! What a thrill. What excitement. I rushed to my wife waving the print, exulting, and over the road to show my friend.

I made do with Shoji, a poor variety of Hosho, used in Japan for window-panes and wall-paper, and later used Goyu, Kochi and Torinoko. Good Hosho came to hand later. I used all these papers unsized, and thus my first prints fell far short of what they might have been, lacking the unique finish-it has been likened to "egg-shell" fresco-that should have distinguished them.

After I had pulled a satisfactory impression from my first wood-blocks I was eager to do more and better. I cut ten new designs in my spare time within the year, and produced more the following year, two of them more ambitious in size and effect. Printing continued to be bothersome, requiring a great deal more skill and knowledge than I possessed at that time, but I persevered and was actually awarded an International prize for my *Norman Bay No. 2*. At about that time I was corresponding with certain artists more accomplished than I, and who were not hampered by ignorance of Japanese methods, and I was enabled, by the well-expressed enthusiasm of a New York print-dealer, to cross the Atlantic and to meet them in close friendship.

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I soon learned how to size paper, and began to use powder colours ground in water instead of water-colour pigment as prepared for painting. Thus I was enabled to produce at will that enchanting bloom of colour which belongs to the best prints from Nippon and which had been my admiration and despair.

After twenty-five years I still find the making of a wood-cut in colour an engrossing, even an exciting undertaking. The print-maker finds himself largely freed from the restrictions that convention imposes upon more important, that is, larger, and more permanent works of art. There is the charm of intimacy in prints; there is a freshness, a vigor, an originality about them that seems to indicate they were created in the spirit of adventure-adventure light-hearted or serious, but exciting. The painter sees his picture grow; the effect of every stroke or touch of his brush is immediately apparent, but the print-maker works, one might say, in the dark; his finished creation is revealed only when the first proof is pulled. That is an exciting moment, a grand climax.

MAKING A WOOD-CUT

[“Another Wood-Cut,” 1-14, 17-22.]

The most faithful source of ideas, naturally, is my sketch-book, although the abundance of material contained therein makes choice difficult-so much so that I frequently give up and create a fresh subject altogether. That is, indeed, the ideal way. Sparked by a chance incident or effect, I think it over, and eventually have an image in my mind. Then comes the difficult matter of a graphic rendering-many sketches from imagination first, later from nature, always with the idea of wood-cut influencing brush or pencil strokes.... I have been going through my sketch-books at intervals and have not yet decided on a subject. It is really a serious decision to make. If I make a bad choice and produce a bad print, my offence will be a hundred times as heinous as it would be were I to paint a picture instead. But here sketched in full colour are mountains and lakes, trees and flowers, waterfalls, sea-pieces, boats, oil fields, towns, houses and shacks-and graveyards, people, animals and birds, and scenes that attract the rabid nature-lover.

I have three nice blocks of cherry-wood all ready for engraving when I settle on a subject. At this point I had better explain how the blocks of cherry-wood became “all ready”, and why cherry-wood anyway.

Art of the Wood-Cut

The Japanese found out centuries ago that, of all woods, mountain cherry, properly seasoned, is best suited for the making of wood-cuts. It is even and close in texture and though hard it is easily cut. It yields colour in printing in the best possible way.... I used one set of English cherry-wood blocks and found the wood admirable, otherwise I find native American cherry-wood quite suitable. Twenty-five years ago this wood was in popular demand for interior finishing and furniture making and one could find it in any lumber yard. To-day it is hard to come by. I pick it up wherever I can. I called recently at one of the largest furniture factories in eastern Canada and asked if they had cut down a cherry tree lately. No, they said, we never use the stuff. The foreman of the shop however was interested when I explained why I carved cherry and produced two short planks which he had salvaged from an old kitchen table and intended to use himself. I was welcome to half, he said, very kindly. A friend in Quebec cut down a tree a while back, had it sawn into planks and shipped them to me. This seems to have seasoned well and I propose to use it for the wood-cut, the making of which I shall here describe.

The preparation of the wood is important. It must be well-seasoned. It must be planed well. Hollows and ridges, however slight, make good printing impossible. After planing, it should be scraped. Razor blades will do the job. I dampen the wood to bring up short fibre ends-let the wood dry, and scrape them off.

To discourage warping of the block I cut grooves in the ends and inlay a piece of oak, or cut the grooves in the oak and set the block in them. But I do not always do this, especially when the plank is small and thick. If the wood warps whilst being worked upon I shall lay it on a pad of wet newspaper, concave side down, place a light weight on top, and leave it for a few hours, or overnight.

Every fine day in the spring and the fall when we lived on the flat prairie, we were accustomed to put baby in the back seat of the car and roam the country-side to see what we could see. It is surprising what gorgeous landscapes that great plain presented, and over all the vast dome of an ever-changing sky. There were somewhat weary miles when nothing pictorial excited us, but always there were enticing distances in which a grain-elevator appears (I became an expert in the pictorial potential of elevators). A copse of trees, a little hill, a field of wheat or rye bending to the wind in rhythmic waves. One day in July, bumping along a dirt road, we came to the village of Dugald. The elevator buildings there were grouped agreeably. We stopped to look. One was a pale gray in colour,

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and the door was red, a hue repeated in the roses in the hedge by the roadside. I made a sketch, using the hedge and the fence for a foreground.

For my present purpose I like this gray and green sketch-pastoral depicting the Dugald elevator. Some call elevators ugly and offensively utilitarian; on the other hand some regard them as Canada's only creditable contribution to architecture. None can deny that a store-house for grain has satisfying associations. To the traveller on the plains the sight of its tower miles away promises food and shelter, the opportunity for communication by rail and mail, and an end to his loneliness, for it betokens a village as surely as does a church-spire in Europe. Moreover, while a single elevator may tell of a small community, a number of elevators grouped together tells of a tidy town surrounded by rich farms. The elevator is the most typical unit in the prairie scene.

So I choose this sketch of an elevator for the subject of my wood-cut. A study of the sketch reveals three planes, which may be reduced to two without difficulty. The masses of colour are mostly well-defined. An outline will embrace the whole design. I check the composition and make a drawing which I mull over. The changes I make are... small and mostly relate to proportion.

This drawing, which we may call the cartoon, is the key to the whole project, and it will provide the pattern for the key-block. It must conform to the size and shape of the wood, and if possible, to the size of the printing paper. I add at least half-an-inch all the way round for margin and registration marks.... When calculations have been made for this purpose I allow for an eighth-of-an-inch or a quarter-of-an-inch expansion of the tracing when it is damped prior to being pasted face down on the wood. However, I have not yet drawn the cartoon. So I measure the wood, subtract an inch-and-a-quarter vertically and horizontally, draw the rectangle, make a strong outline in pencil or ink, and colour it. I have two-and-a-half...blocks, so I am restricted to five colours. I shall demonstrate how I settle for five and use seven.

We have already decided that the key-block, which will be the key for subsequent blocks, shall be an outline. Sometimes an outline is unnecessary, and the colours are fitted like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, perhaps with the help of an outline which is afterwards discarded, or by drawing on progressive dry proofs from the key-block. I will discuss this technique later. The Japanese took the cartoon at this point and pasted it face down on the wood-block. The cartoon was not coloured, so they lost nothing. I often do the same. However, if I have some transparent paper I make



Waterfall and Birch Tree, n.d., Wood engraving, 13.6 x 17.0 cm,
The Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Art of the Wood-Cut

a tracing from the cartoon. This I damp. The wood-cut artist is forever damping paper and has learned to do it properly. I cut two sheets of newsprint, exceeding the size of the tracing by at least one inch all the way round. I wet this with a wide brush and place the tracing between the two, and the three papers between two sheets of glass. Two hours is the minimum time for the operation. Now that it is wet it may be impossible to handle. I do not attempt to pick it up. I brush paste evenly over the wood-block. I see that the tracing is face up as it lies on the newsprint, and I let the block rest lightly upon it. I must make no mistake in the placing.... When dry, the tracing is clearly revealed through transparent paper, but not through the other. I therefore sandpaper it until only a thin skin remains, and then oil it.

I am happy to be at this work again, and since the wood-block is prepared and my cartoon carefully checked, traced, pasted down, all is ready for cutting.

Up to this point I have done a good day's work, but it was physically easy compared with what is to follow. After cutting for a day my fingers will be stiff, and there will be a large blister on the palm of my hand. I shall also be blinking at the light and experiencing some difficulty in focusing my eyes. But let us get on with the job.

I assemble my tools and clear my work table. First my new bench-hook. My block fits on top of it and can be pushed against the back ledge. My knife, two gouges, a chisel, an oil stone, and a can of machine oil are laid out; my knife has served me for 35 years....

My most useful gouge is my smallest and measures one-eighth-of-an-inch across-it is four-and-a-half inches long over all, and fits well into the palm of my hand. I have a quarter-inch gouge of the same type and a third one, a flat three-eighth inch gouge, a wood-carver's tool with a long handle. This takes two hands to manipulate but it is a fast worker....

My chisels are one-quarter inch and one-half inch, and have ball handles like the small gouges. With these tools I shall lower the surface of the wood, all over the block, leaving undisturbed only those portions which represent the lines and masses required for printing. The principle is that of the rubber stamp. It is best to think of these waste areas as definite shapes with well-defined contours. The largest is the sky. I shall take most of it out as I would dig a shallow pit with sloping sides. The first cut is along the sky-line, made with a sloping knife, and is continued along the boundaries of the sky area. A second cut parallel with the first forms a V-shaped trench all the way around. Now I lower all the wood surface within this area with my flat gouge, taking care not to cut

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too close to the edge. The depth of the gouging is trifling-one-eighth-of-an-inch and deeper in the middle, shallower at the edges. The small gouge will finish the job. My practice is to do all the knife work first and then the gouging. It will take one, two, or three days to cut the key-block and only pride and good workmanship will relieve the tedium....

Cutting requires care, and needs a little explanation. In the first place all the tools must be kept sharp. Blunt tools spell slips and damage either to the wood, or, worse still, to one's hands. Therefore it is well to keep the oil-stone handy and to use it freely.... Cutting a line requires four strokes of the knife, and all these strokes are made at an angle. The first one is applied to one side of the line and the second is made to meet the first, freeing a strip of wood with a triangular section: so that we have a V-shape trench on one side of the line. The second and third strokes make a similar trench on the remaining side.

It is not entirely true to say that all the non-printing surface of the block is removed. There are sometimes large areas requiring reduction, such as the sky in our cartoon. To gouge it out completely would complicate the printing-a fact that will be readily apparent later on. So an island of undisturbed surface is left in the middle of this otherwise large depression. Its edges must be smoothed and rounded with a chisel, and sandpapered.

There is one thing I am not likely to forget before I can consider the block finished. Having the subsequent colours in mind, provision must be made to ensure exact registration, or fit, when they were put together. The antique oriental device I employ is simple yet most effective. It is in fact that most exact method of registration ever invented. It consists merely of a depressed angle and line made to fit printing paper-corner and edge. The angle is cut in the lower right-hand corner, and the line on the lower left edge. These must be placed on the key-block at a distance from the picture equal to the margin desired in the finished print. They are cut with chisel held vertically, and waste wood is removed within the angle, and on the inside of the line smoothly so that the paper will slip into them easily. They need be only deep enough to hold the paper.

When I have finished, after heaving a sigh of relief, I wash the paper off the block, and I am ready to pull some proofs....

The peaceful and productive years between the two great wars saw a revival of the ancient art of wood-cut in Europe and America. Materials were easily obtained locally-cherry-wood from the lumber yards, finely ground pigment from the colour-grinder, brushes and printing pads-all were in

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ample supply. But paper has always been imported from Japan. No Western paper-maker was willing to produce the soft long-fibred sheet like Hosho which Japan has made for hundreds of years, or Torinoko paper devised especially for the one particular purpose.

In 1943 imports stopped it. The making of colour-prints from wood-blocks so far as I was concerned stopped too. I did make one little print every year, devised to fit the scraps of paper left over from larger works.... It was a matter for great regret that I could do no more. Wood-cuts had been my bread and butter. I considered the idea of making paper myself in the Japanese manner and read all the available literature on the subject. Here again I was thwarted. Secrecy regarding methods still persists in Japan and no book gave the whole story. The paper-mulberry-parts of which are essential ingredients apparently will not grow hereabouts. I might have investigated other barks and fibres-the mallow plant for example-but my native indolence discouraged me, and anyway it was white mulberry paper I wanted. Some western papers have been considered as fair substitutes.... Hot pressed, thin, water-colour paper, soaked for a day or two in water to free it of some of its size, is almost practicable, but it is hard and does not stand up to the rough usage of printing, being short-fibred. I got good trial proofs on mimeograph duplicating paper, but it is poor and perishable. In 1948 came a letter from a former pupil living on the west coast-would I care to share in importing some Hosho paper from Japan. Would I !

In the course of time-nearly a year-a ream of Hosho arrived-good Hosho, duly compounded of mulberry, matsumata, gampi, bamboo and rice straw-sized with kyosumori, or norinoki, and glossed with rice flour. Pure white Hosho, fit to be inscribed with the name of Minerva and reverently set on her shrine. There was no question about it-I determined to make another wood-cut in colour at once....

Etchers and engravers especially are at fault when, as nearly always happens, they neglect to treat soft Japanese papers with a gelatine size suitably potent. Sometimes they get away with it, for one impression upon the paper may not destroy its surface; but it is difficult for the colour-printer to be anything but exact in this matter, for he uses his paper roughly....

William Giles' studio, where I first met Urushibara, was a precious place in Chelsea, the stone-flagged hall through which one passed to reach it was three steps below the outside pavement. It was dark, dank, deserted, and mysterious, a magnificent setting for tragedy, and so actually it was once used in the movies. Midway along it was a twisting stairway with a plain iron rail. The stone treads

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were worn hollow by passing feet. You must climb, *ad Parnassum*. Giles, I think, always occupied the top studio.

Urushibara arrived with a parcel of brushes under his arm, as Giles had suggested, and he explained in adequate English, that Giles also had written of my difficulties in sizing Japanese paper. He wanted to show me! What a fine fellow, I thought. I produced a roll of very thin Hosho paper upon which he might demonstrate. Giles supplied warm water, two or three sheets of gelatine, and a pinch of alum. To determine the right quantity of alum he shuffled the sheets of gelatine together, tore them in half, and balanced powdered alum against one-half portion on a pair of scales. Then he nonchalantly-it was all easy and nonchalant -put the gelatine to dissolve in a jug-full of warm water. The water should not boil he said.

When the gelatine was all dissolved he added the alum, and poured the solution on to a shallow dish. He placed one sheet of Hosho paper on a drawing board, smooth side up; selected a broad short-haired brush from his parcel; and proceeded to brush size over the paper. He made a bold, six-inch swath down the middle of the sheet and others at right angles, or parallel, or so as to avoid making creases. The paper became saturated with size but not supersaturated; that is no free liquid was visible anywhere but in the dish. The second sheet of paper, laid upon the first, was treated in exactly the same way and the remaining sheets, one over the other, in turn. The finished pile was left there while we talked, and after half an hour each sheet was put on newspaper laid upon the floor to dry....

Back in Canada, in the years following my lesson from Urushibara in London, my sizing sometimes seemed inadequate. The surface of the print lacked that magic patina that perfection imposes. I wrote to my friend explaining my difficulties. One reply served for all complaints. "Try a little more alum."

All the pigments I use are dry powders, obtained from any colour-grinder. They must be well-ground. ... The common binder is paste-rice-flour, wheat-flour, or starch (in that order of preference). I had better make some, since I have found even women among my pupils who couldn't.

I put a heaping tea-spoonful of flour or starch in a cup, and mix enough cold water with it to make a thick smooth paste. I fill the cup with boiling water, stirring the while and hope it will "turn" or thicken. Rice-flour will rarely oblige and the mixture must be poured into a saucepan and boiled. Domestic flour will turn at times; starch should thicken always....

A batch of Hosho paper has been sized and is now quite hard and dry. The key-block is cut. I am ready to prepare for printing. I cut a card-board masque to the exact size of what the print will be and which allows for a good margin on each side; in this case a rectangular sheet measuring nine-and-a-half by thirteen-and-three-eighths inches. It is carefully squared. I place this on a sheet of Hosho and cut around it. I get exactly two print-size pieces from the one sheet. I need a definite number of impressions from the key-block, determined by the number of colours I propose to use. Seven colours seem to be indicated. I cut ten or twelve sheets of printing paper in case of accident. Then I tear seven pieces of newsprint paper an inch or two larger than these on all sides. On a sheet of glass or metal a little larger still I place one sheet of newsprint and brush water over it evenly. I superimpose two sheets of Hosho, then another damp sheet of newsprint, and so on until the pile is complete. A second sheet of glass goes on top. The papers will be evenly damp in a few hours, though I sometimes leave them overnight. Two hours is the minimum soaking they should have.

In the morning comes another sortie to the kitchen to make rice-paste. Here I must interrupt the sequence of events to describe first the setting of the table and secondly the tools and materials used in printing.

The block rests on the table right in front of me on four little pads of damp cheesecloth-one under each corner, to prevent slipping. The pile of printing paper sits behind the block and will spread to the left. On my right is a sheet of ground glass with a muller and a palette knife near, and beyond it lies the bowl of rice-paste, pots of dry colour, a bowl of water, a bowl of brushes standing in water, and a sponge. On my left are the dry things-a sheet of water-proof paper (butter-paper), a dry cloth, and a baren, or printing pad.

All my printing brushes are Japanese-made and have the advantage of having been made for the one purpose. They may be bought occasionally in an oriental novelty shop in one's own town. Made of horse-hair they are not conditioned for immediate use, but must be singed carefully so that the bristles lose their square-cut appearance and will spread pigment more evenly. They must be soaked in water for an hour or two before being used and when not in use should be hung up by the handle. Several sizes are necessary and two or three of each-a six-inch brush for sizing paper, two three-inch for large areas of colour, three one-inch and a lot of smaller ones.

Baren is a Japanese word.... It means "printing-pad". It is a disc of cardboard or wood padded with cotton-batting or horse-hair and

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wrapped in a bamboo leaf so folded that the knot comes at the back and forms the handle by which it is grasped. Since the leaf dries and becomes too brittle to survive use in my country, I have had to construct a substitute already acclimatised. It is a disc of wood scored with lines sometimes simulating the texture of bamboo leaf on its face and having a handle on the back. The disc is thin enough to be slightly flexible....

Now the table is set. The pots of colour are limited to one at this time-black.

The remnants of the tracing that I pasted down on the wood are sponged away carefully, and as a preliminary measure a little paste is brushed over the clean wet block. I mix the black powder with water, enough to form a stiff paste, fill a large brush, add a pea-sized bit of rice paste, and apply it to the block vigorously. I put down the brush and reach for a sheet of printing paper, holding each side (near the bottom) between my first and second fingers, so that it is perfectly balanced and does not bend or crease. I guide the right-hand bottom corner into the angle cut for registration with my thumb, and the lower edge along the line to the left. When the paper is released it should lie flatly on the block.... I could never explain all this to a south-paw.

I grasp my baren, rub the back of the printing paper, interposing a sheet of butter-paper to avoid tears. I peel off the sheet and examine it, and if it is a good proof I lay it down on a damp sheet of newsprint so that it will not dry too soon. I colour the block again and repeat the process until all the sheets are printed, and then I paste each one face-down upon separate blocks. Before doing so however, I scan each block-surface and decide which are best suited for particular colours. The sky, for example, is a large unencumbered area and demands the smoothest wood, devoid of defects. I considered the grain also-it prints and may be either a blemish or a virtue in the ultimate.

We decided on seven colours, but there are only two blocks left, that is, four available surfaces to accommodate six colours. So one whole block must be made to carry four colours, two a side. The character of the design with so large an area of sky, makes this easy enough. I just invert the block for the second and the fourth colours. ... When the blocks are again thoroughly dry I sandpaper and oil them carefully until the impressions of the key-block are clearly visible.

I shall tackle the sky-block first. It takes only a few minutes. First I cut around the whole area occupied by the sky-three straight edges and the sky-line, and repeat the register marks very precisely.

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The third block will be the basic gray of the elevator and the gray-green grass in the foreground. I shall print it in two colours since they merge only in a small passage on the right.

The fourth block includes yellow grass and a morsel of bright green grass in the foreground—all of it forming just a narrow strip of colour on the lower edge, leaving most of the block free for number five.

Five involves two reds, well separated. This block is inverted.

Six: cool, dark accents in the depths of the foreground foliage, the fence-posts, and a few fairly strong lines under the eaves of the buildings.

Seven: on the same block and the same side as six, but inverted, there is room for further dark lines, as compared with six—rusted barbed wire and a few deep browns in the fence-posts, and my signature only.

Thus the cutting is completed. Provided it is accurate, there remains only the printing. Proofs must be pulled and carefully analyzed. There may be concealed mistakes somewhere. Woe is me if there is a mistake with the knife. The only remedy is plugging, which involves digging a deep hole in the wood and cutting a plug to fit it exactly. It is usually easier to begin again, or to cut out the offending passage and recut it on a fresh plank. The register marks may be a bit out. A blank space may have been left inadvertently. All this has been corrected, let us say, but there remains another problem, an important one—exact colour, which must be decided upon. This may take some time; I try out ideas before I discard them. On the other hand I may decide quickly—the original sketch contains the germ of the idea, including the colour, which may be wholly satisfactory.

The blocks give back colour reluctantly until they are thoroughly damp and impregnated with it. So, unlike etchings or drypoints, which produce their best impressions early, wood yields its best results last. It is therefore best to do the largest possible batch of prints at one sitting, or two.... Let us say fifty of this subject; it is simple and promises to be fairly easy.

I shall damp the paper overnight so as to leave a full day for printing. I shuffle the sheets before breakfast so that they will be more evenly wet, and I usually have to brush the top sheet with water.

The key-block comes first. I must print it as quickly as possible so that expansion and warping will not confuse me later. An hour, say, since the block is a thick one. I clean and damp the block with my sponge before mixing the pigments, and immediately before applying it I brush a little rice-paste over it. The colour is a blue-gray, a mixture of deep French ultramarine with Venetian

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red, ground together in water with muller or palette knife, with a three-inch brush. The paper must be tucked carefully into the register marks. The baren will slide more smoothly over the papers if I flick it first over my hair. I was reluctant to do this for obvious reasons, but it is all right-even dry hair yields enough natural oil for this purpose.

After the first half-dozen, the prints come more easily and begin to look better, the wood-pores are filling up, and the big brush is carrying the correct load of water. I work faster as I develop a good working rhythm and I am done in an hour.

The sky had better come next. It is a large flat mass. The paper must be wetter for this. The newsprint sheets are therefore redamped and the pile is returned to its glass covers and left for a while, until, say, I have cleaned the brush, washed the palette (but preserving the blue-gray pigment), and renewed my supply of clean water. This block may be printed thrice. First a warm gray-mostly ochre-and again a large brush. For the next wash I mix a little more Venetian red to the blue pigment I used for the key-block and more water and paste to reduce its intensity. I dip only one corner of my brush into it and the other corner I dip in the rice-paste (delicately), and with horizontal strokes of the brush I lay the colour on the block in natural gradation, and so it appears on the print. The blue sky across the top of the picture is done in the same way, being also a graded wash. I use phthalo-cyanine blue for this purpose. These three colours I actually printed at one and the same time, using three brushes. It might be done more leisurely in two printings, and more accurately perhaps. The reds and the greens present no difficulties, and further printing needs no comment. When these are done I have reached the same point of exultation achieved by William Woollett when he climbed to his roof and fired off his cannon.

When perfect impressions come peeling off the block I have a feeling of great satisfaction. It is the beauty of the surface texture that mainly intrigues me at this stage-the close-grained, dull glaze of the film of pigment that seems to lie on the top of the paper, yet penetrates all the way through, that holds the grain-pattern of the wood-block to relieve its flatness. For such happy results every step of the process must be properly performed....

But I must still print another fifty copies, maybe more, for some may be spoiled, and the edition I propose to publish is 100, and all must be dried, signed, numbered and titled.

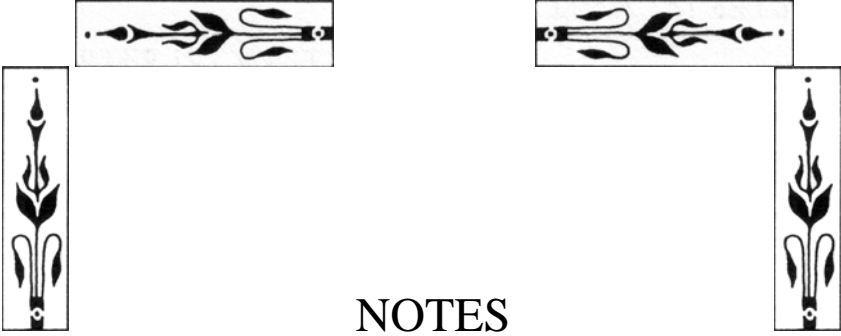
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The inscriptions are written or lettered in pencil. Traditionally the title is placed on the extreme left on the lower margin, followed by the number of the print and of the edition, and the signature is written on the extreme right, thus:

Prairie Elevator 1/100
Phillips.

W J.

To dry the prints I put them between sheets of cardboard and place a weight on top of the pile.



CHAPTER I: PICTURES ON THE WALL

1. The Richardson Brothers occupied premises on Donald Street and later at 332 Main Street.
2. An invented name for the coloured wood-cut.
3. Benjamin Robert Haydon, *Autobiography*, Vol. I. (London, 1853).
4. "Spanish Painter's Big Show Tours the Nation," *Life*, VIII, No. 10 (4 March 1940), p. 59.
5. Jay Hambridge, *Dynamic Symmetry* (New Haven, Conn., 1920).

CHAPTER II: SKETCHING IN CANADA

1. Thomas W. McLean (1881-1951) was active with Tom Thomson and others in painting northern Ontario during the Algonquin School period. He moved to Winnipeg in 1912 where he worked for Brigdens.
2. Phillips writes: "...a wisp of smoke above the trees, a foot-print in the sand, is no more welcome...." The text has been changed.
3. John Singer Sargent camped at Lake O'Hara in the summer of 1916. Lake O'Hara is in the Fogg Museum, Harvard University.

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4. W M. Halliday came to Kingcome Inlet to farm in 1894. He moved to Alert Bay in 1897 to teach at the Indian school for seven years, after which he became federal agent for the Kwawkewlth Agency, serving 25 years in that capacity. He is best known for his vigorous suppression of the southern Kwakiutl potlatch between 1914 and 1922.

CHAPTER III: CANADIAN ART

1. Luscombe Carroll was the proprietor of the Carroll Gallery, London, England.

2. Probably *Beaver Swamp, Algoma*, Art Gallery of Ontario.

3. Phillips is here in error. *The West Wind* is by Arthur Lismer (National Gallery of Canada) or perhaps Thomson's sketch (Art Gallery of Ontario) may be meant; both *The Jack Pine* and *A Northern River* must be those by Thomson (both National Gallery of Canada); *The First Snow Ducks* is unidentifiable.

4. Actually 1920.

5. National Gallery of Canada.

6. Actually 1916.

7. *Elements* is in the Art Gallery of Ontario; *Rocks and Maples*, also called *Autumn Colour*, is in the National Gallery of Canada.

8. F.B. Housser, *A Canadian Art Movement* (Toronto, 1926).

9. Ernest Fosbery, "As to Certain Myths," *Saturday Night*, No. 13 (12 February 1927), p. 3.

10. Actually 1921. It is now in the National Gallery of Canada.

11. Lord Bessborough.

12. The context of this 1932 controversy may be found in Rebecca Sisler, *Passionate Spirits: A History of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, 1880-1890* (Toronto/Vancouver, 1980), Chapters 6 and 7, especially 159-60.

Notes

13. Phillips is probably referring to the Contemporary Arts Society.

14. Phillips means the Jasper Room of the Chateau Laurier Hotel.

CHAPTER IV: WESTERN CANADIAN ART

1. Bertram Brooker, ed. (Toronto, 1929).

2. "Some Notes on Art," *Canadian Bookman*, VIII, No. 8 (August, 1926), p. 256.

3. Paul Kane, *The Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* (London, 1859).

4. *The Barn*, an oil on plywood painting, 11 ~6 x 14%a inches, is now in the Winnipeg Art Gallery. We are indebted to Patricia Bovey for this information.

5. In the Art Gallery of Ontario.

6. There are two Black Tusk paintings. A small one is in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia; a larger canvas, probably the one referred to here, remains in private hands.

7. He was always known as Charles.

8. Actually from 1887 to 1893.

9. The architect G. Thornton Sharp served as Acting Principal during the first year of the school's existence.

10. Emily Carr, *Klee Wyck* (Toronto, 1941).

11. Yakuglas, or Charlie James, was the step father of Mungo Martin.

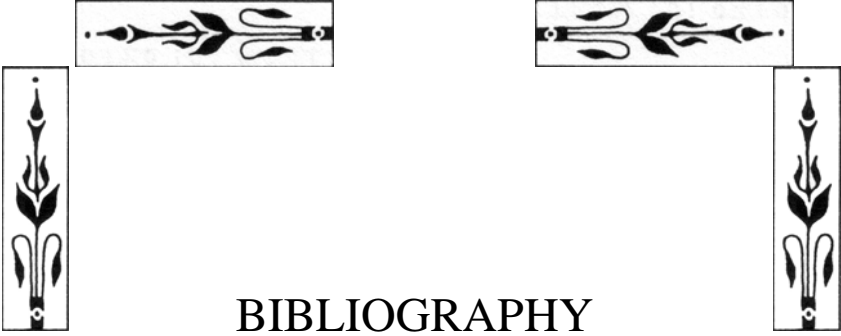
12. Hoh-hoh or Aokhokw, a bird with a long bill who cracks men's skulls and eats their brains.

13. John C. Goodfellow, *The Totem-Poles in Stanley Park* (Vancouver, n.d.).

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