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# FOREWORD

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**T**HE group of seven artists whose pictures are here exhibited have for several years held a like vision concerning Art in Canada. They are all imbued with the idea that an Art must grow and flower in the land before the country will be a real home for its people.

¶ That this Art will differ from the Art of the past, and from the present day Art, of any people; superseding nothing, only adding to what has been done. Also it seems inevitable when something vital and distinctive arises it will be met—

- (1) by ridicule, abuse or indifference.
- (2) The so-called Art lovers, having a deeply rooted idea that Art is a matter of picture buying through the medium of the auctioneer or dealer, will refuse to recognize anything that does not come up to the commercialized, imported standard of the picture-sale room.

They prefer to enrich the salesman than accept the productions by artists native to the land, whose work is more distinctive, original and vital, and of greater value to the country.

- (3) The more sophisticated will meet it with: "If you have no traditions, no background, no Art is possible." How then do traditions arise? Or they will say that anything

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produced will shortly die and be superseded—which is to say that nothing has been or ever will be worth the doing. They will say anything that sounds erudite, patting their own backs at the expense of Art and country.

Finally: A very small group of intelligent individuals, realizing that the greatness of a country depends upon three things: "its Words, its Deeds, and its Art." Recognizing that Art is an essential quality in human existence they will welcome and support any form of Art expression that sincerely interprets the spirit of a nation's growth.

¶ The artists here represented make no pretence of being the only ones in Canada doing significant work. But they do most emphatically hold that their work is significant and of real value to the country. They also hold with A. E. Russell, the Irish writer, "that no country can ever hope to rise beyond a vulgar mediocrity where there is not unbounded confidence in what its humanity can do." And that, "if a people do not believe they can equal or surpass the stature of any humanity which has been upon this world, then they had better emigrate and become servants to some superior people."

¶ A word as you view the pictures. The artists invite adverse criticism. Indifference is the greatest evil they have to contend with. But they would ask you—do you read books that contain only what you already know? If not, they argue, that you should hardly want to see pictures that show you what you can already see for yourselves.



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