

to such painters as John Singleton Copley, George Inness and Winslow Homer. So that while Canada produced no painters or writers of world-wide reputation she was not hopelessly overshadowed by her powerful neighbour.

*The Foundation of the Ontario Society of Artists.*—Furthermore, it must be observed that while these movements and achievements were being felt abroad, Canada was unconsciously laying the foundations of a vigorous artistic future and, indeed, for an awakening of interest in all the arts. For a movement had begun, a movement which culminated in 1872 with the formation of the Ontario Society of Artists, of which the foundation members were John A. Fraser, Robert F. Gagen, Charles Stewart Millard, Marmaduke Matthews, T. Mower Martin, James Hoch, and J. W. Bridgeman. W. H. Howland, a layman, was the first president, and John A. Fraser, a painter, the first vice-president. A week after the organization meeting H. Hancock was elected a member and appointed secretary, a position which he held until 1889, when he was succeeded by Robert F. Gagen, who held the position until he died a few years ago and who for more than half a century was not only a refined and able artist but as well a genial guide, philosopher and friend to hundreds of beginners in art in Ontario.

John A. Fraser was, particularly at that time, an inspiration to the artists associated with him. He had an unusually direct method of handling water-colours, and in this medium his work still takes one right back to Cotman.

The first exhibition of The Ontario Society was held during April, 1873. Among the exhibitors were five who were still exhibiting fifty years later: Robert F. Gagen, F. M. Bell-Smith, F. A. Verner, T. Mower Martin, and Marmaduke Matthews.

To appreciate the significance of this early society it is well to keep in mind the fact that it preceded the organization of the Royal Canadian Academy and that it preceded also the organization in the United States of the Art Students' League and the Society of American Artists.

*The Foundation of the Montreal Art Association.*—During this period, that is during the 'seventies, a wave of artistic sentiment reached many persons of influence in both Canada and the States. As a result the Art Students' League of New York was formed in 1875 and the Society of American Artists in 1878. About the same time a group of enthusiastic laymen, headed by Beniah Gibb, founded the Montreal Art Association, which ever since has been the most robust art organization in the Dominion, not so much for the encouragement of art in Canada, if one could except its school of art, as for the acquisition of a beautiful gallery and beautiful paintings to place therein. This association had great advantages accruing from the sympathy and support of wealthy citizens, advantages that never have been enjoyed by any similar association in Canada.

Canada, however, could not as yet claim much distinction in art. Nevertheless the period of the 'seventies was formative, as well in politics as in æsthetics. To the student of Canadian history it possesses features of peculiar interest. The confederated provinces, bound together here and there by straggling communities and separated elsewhere by long stretches of uninhabited wilderness, were taking their first uncertain steps towards the goal of a great, extensive Dominion. The fishermen of Nova Scotia knew but little of the Quebec habitant or of the Ontario settler; and the habitant and the settler in their turn knew nothing more even of the wonderful possibilities of their own territories