SOPHIA THERESA PEMBERTON: HER LIFE AND ART

by

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Sophia Theresa Pemberton was born in 1869 and died in 1959. She was raised in one of the affluent and socially important families of late nineteenth century Victoria, British Columbia. At an early age, Sophie, as she was known throughout her life, received lessons in drawing, painting, and music. In this she was like most young women of her class and upbringing. Unlike her peers Sophie decided to pursue a career as a professional artist and by the early 1880's was seeking artistic training.

Sophie excelled in her lessons and was soon established as a promising artist with an international reputation. Her work was known to the critics in Western Canada, England and the capital of the art world - Paris. She exhibited extensively at the Royal Academy, the Salon and in group and individual shows during the last years of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. Her career came to an abrupt end shortly after her first marriage.

In the years since her last exhibition as a practising artist she has slipped into semi-obscurity and has been virtually overlooked by the public and in the pages of Canadian Art History. Her modest accomplishments as an artist and her outstanding achievement as the first woman artist to win the Prix Julian, in 1899, are only briefly mentioned in the standard Canadian Art History texts.

In searching for the details of Sophie's life I have referred to numerous newspapers and journals of her day. As well, I have benefitted from interviews with her two nieces Mrs. A.L. Harvey and Mrs. C. Holmes. Both women, advanced in years, have vivid and detailed memories of their aunt with whom they spent a great deal of time as young women. Finally, I was given access to many diaries and letters of Sophie's by various family members. All of the paintings located for this thesis were found in family collections, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and the B.C. Provincial Archives.

My thesis will show the reasons for the brevity of Sophie's career, a combination of spouse disapproval, ill health and an unfortunate accident. Possible reasons for the demise of her reputation are given - modest artistic output, changing tastes and the fact that most of her works remained in family collections. Also, a brief artistic analysis shows the range and scope of Sophie's efforts and indicates that, had her career continued, she might well have developed a more highly distinctive and personal artistic statement.
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I. Introduction

Canadian student artists, from the middle of the nineteenth century to World War I, travelled to Europe to complete their artistic training. Students from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, like their American counterparts, sought the latest schooling available from European masters. It has been estimated that more than one hundred fifty aspiring Canadian students alone travelled to England, France and other European countries during this period.\(^1\) These "willing exiles", along with thousands of European students, were involved in the "official" art world.

Although these Canadian students could, and did, study at Eastern art schools and schools in the United States they generally completed their credentials by study abroad. The European official system was comprised of a rigorous and exacting training with emphasis on the fundamentals. Long years of apprenticeship were necessary before academic sanction and official recognition could be bestowed.\(^2\) Competition was fierce for the various prizes, medals and certificates which marked the steady advancement of the dedicated student artist. Ultimately the goal was the Prix de Rome; a virtual guarantee of success, fame and fortune. It was this official, academic art system which the young Sophie Pemberton decided to grapple with by 1890.\(^3\)

Although the last half of the nineteenth century saw more and more women artists entering the system and achieving distinction, change was gradual.\(^4\) Women students were not permitted into the life classes until the eighties. Victorian
attitudes prevailed and proper young ladies simply did not view the naked human body. With the advent of segregated life classes women had greater access to the more thorough training men students had enjoyed; however, there were still painfully absurd restrictions. Male models, for example, were required to wear yards and yards of material as loin cloths to effectively conceal the offensive parts of the male anatomy. In fact, all the classes of instruction were segregated and women received less time and fewer critical evaluations of their work.5

There are a variety of artist's accounts from the last half of the nineteenth century which chronicle details of the education and conditions found in the numerous ateliers of the European academic art world.6 Especially vivid is the journal of a young Russian noblewoman who attended the Académie Julian in the late 1870's.7

Rodolphe Julian (1839-1907) opened his Académie in 1868 and by the 1880's his was generally conceded to be the finest institution at which a woman could receive instruction.8 Marie Bashkirtseff described the hours at Julian's as being "from eight in the morning till noon, and from one in the afternoon to five".9 The system of critiques is referred to in an entry for Saturday, October 13:

"It is on Saturday that M. Tony Robert-Fleury comes to the studio. He is the artist who painted Le Dernier Jour de Corinthe, which was purchased by the State for Luxembourg. The most distinguished artists of Paris come to the studio from time to time to give us the benefit of their advice."10
By all accounts those visits "from time time" were rather infrequent in the women's studios. Nearly a month later the author refers to the beginnings of the academic curriculum.

On Monday, November 26 Marie wrote:

"I took my first lesson in anatomy at four o'clock to-day, just after my drawing lesson. It lasted till half-past four.

M. Cuyer is my teacher; he was sent to me by Mathias Duval, who has promised to obtain permission for me to visit the School of Fine Arts. I began with the bones, of course, and one of my bureau drawers is full of vertebrae - natural ones.

This is frightful when one thinks that the other two contain perfumed paper, visiting cards, etc."  

Marie was soon thoroughly engrossed in the demanding training which Sophie Pemberton was to undertake a few years later.

Study in the ateliers followed an exacting regimen which was divided into three main parts. The first, elementary drawing, was further divided into "modèles de dessin" and "à la bosse." The former were painstaking copies of engravings while the latter involved drawing after the plaster cast.

When a student had demonstrated proficiency in these basic drawing exercises she moved on and passed "à la nature".  

The second main area of instruction, "à la nature", was drawing the live model. With pencil, or more commonly charcoal, the student spent many hours in an effort to gain mastery of figure drawing. Earlier lessons, at the elementary drawing level, were integrated into this intermediary stage of instruction. The "académie", or life drawing, once mastered, allowed the student artist finally, to use oil paint and proceed to the last level of instruction.
FIGURE 1. Cardinal, 1890, Pencil on Paper
50 x 34 cm., Art Gallery of Gr. Victoria
At this final level the aspiring artist made paint sketches of the live model and also copies the professor's own work or, more importantly, the Old Masters. Robert Harris has left us a delightful account of a number of students diligently copying Old Masters at the National Gallery:

"On Thursday I went to the National Gallery and began a copy of a portrait by Velasquez. On Thursdays and Fridays only students are admitted but they are there by hundreds. There are always easels around the good pictures. I am in a very bad place at my picture. There were three in before me so I can't get a fair chance. However as I am further on than the others I don't mind. The lady who has the best place is a poor stick and doesn't understand the picture she is trying to copy, but she is set off by a little duffer of a man who is the most preposterous dauber in the place. I don't think I ever saw anything so utterly hideous as the leering monster he is creating, and what adds to the solemnity of the situation is the little fellow's evident satisfaction. He steps back, cocks his head to one side, and then gives his canvas a wipe, finishing off with a dextrous flourish of his brush in the air. He seems to have a good many respectable friends. He seems so dogged he may mend. The other is a young lady and is getting on better as far as she has gone. I think she must be one of the South Kensington students by the way she works. She gets worse as she begins to paint, but she differs from the little duffer in that she sees it, and every now and then heaves such a deep sigh that all the easels rattle."

After these long, arduous hours of practice the student progressed to the last stage of the third level and executed an "esquisse peinte". This was a major oil sketch, of any subject, which afforded the student an opportunity to demonstrate her mastery of all the academic curriculum.

The long and demanding academic training was eagerly sought after by many thousands of students and competition was keen to get into the art schools and ateliers. A certain degree of competence was required before admittance and that competence was generally the result of years of individual
study with private tutoring, if affordable. Sophie Pemberton was more than adequately prepared for her formal art instruction and she was to distinguish herself as no woman student had done before her.

This thesis will deal with Sophie's life and her art. Through newspaper accounts, personal journals, letters, and interviews with those who knew her I have reconstructed some of the salient details of her life. Her student efforts, as well, are analyzed within the academic framework detailed above. Finally, I have focused on some of her smaller, more personal works in an effort to reveal the breadth and depth I perceive in Sophie's art. These smaller works demonstrate that, had her career continued to fruition, she might well have established a more personal artistic style as she developed beyond the bounds of her academic training.
II. Her Life and Art

Sophie Theresa Pemberton was born in Victoria, British Columbia on February 13, 1869. Of the three sons and daughters in the Pemberton family, Sophie was her father's favorite.\(^1\) The two often went for long walks in Pemberton Wood and they remained close until his death in 1893.\(^2\) Like all young ladies raised in wealthy and respectable Victorian families, Sophie had an opportunity to learn drawing, painting, and music. She was particularly interested in drawing and painting and at an early age demonstrated some talent for these disciplines.

Sophie received her first schooling at Mrs. Cridge's Reformed Episcopal School and was awarded an Honourable Mention for painting in a school contest when only thirteen years old.\(^3\) Her interest in the visual arts continued throughout her teenage years as she applied herself with increasing diligence to her studies.

There are no references to any instructors she may have had in the frontier community of Victoria.\(^4\) Nevertheless, she was serious about her efforts and later newspaper accounts tell of the long hours she spent in the draughty studio at the family home:\(^5\)

"In the tower of 'Gonzales' was the studio, with south windows looking to the sea and mountains, and a north light, and day after day and night after night a young girl worked at her painting there."\(^6\)

The large studio was impossible to heat and the young artist was often ill with a cold. Poor health was to plague Sophie throughout her lifetime, however, even at an early age she pursued her studies with undaunted enthusiasm. Dates
FIGURE 2. Plaster Cast, c. 1890, Oil on Canvas
61 x 51 cm., Victoria: Private Collection
are vague, but sometime in the late 1880's Sophie attended the San Francisco School of Art. Like many Canadian art students who could afford it, Sophie received training in the United States prior to attending the more prestigious schools of the European Art World.  

Sophie's appetite for a more thorough training was only whetted by her brief stay in San Francisco. Again, like her contemporaries from all over North America, Sophie realized the value — in fact, near necessity — of a continental finish to her artistic training. The addition of a European period of study to an artist's credentials was of paramount importance in the increasingly competitive Canadian art scene. By 1890 Sophie's persistent pleas finally persuaded her reluctant parents to allow their determined daughter to travel abroad.

This, in itself, was a victory for Sophie considering the entrenched prejudice against women artists. Undoubtedly her wealthy, upper-class parents had misgivings about her studio work at home and they had to overcome deep reservations before allowing their young daughter to travel to England to continue her studies. As an unidentified columnist was to remark much later:

"It was all very well, they said, for a young lady of the '80's and '90's to paint neat water colourings to pass the time. But why did Sophie have to be so ambitious — as if she were a man? Only men were great painters! and here was their daughter painting on huge canvases and yearning to study in Paris and London."

Sophie was just twenty-one years old when she sailed for London, England. Her goal was the Cape Nichol School
of Art in South Kensington. She studied hard and continued to apply herself with industry. Friends and family were anxious about her progress and the toll which long hours of work were to take on her health. Nonetheless, student works from this period demonstrate that Sophie was learning her lessons well and that she was adequately prepared for her formal instruction.

Long hours of practice sustained throughout her teenage years and the brief stay at San Francisco more than helped her with the artistic exercise of the European academic curriculum. An analysis of the pencil drawing *Cardinal* demonstrates the thoroughness with which she had prepared herself. In this drawing (Figure 1) Sophie employed both of the two academically acceptable drawing techniques.

The "hachure", characterized by cross hatchings, is seen in the vestments and background. This technique provided the artist with a method of capturing the effects of light and shade. The "estompe" technique required a small cylindrical roll of paper with a pointed end. This device was used to smudge the pencil lines in the face of the Cardinal and the soft, smooth modelling effect conveys the tactile sensation of skin. Sophie's "*modele de dessin*", a copy of an engraving, shows her early mastery of draftsmanship even at the first major level of instruction in the academic curriculum.

The second major area of instruction in the academic curriculum is seen in Sophie's oil sketch *Plaster Cast* (Figure 2). After passing "à la bosse" and mastering the charcoal or pencil sketching of casts, the students were
allowed to use paint. In this oil sketch Sophie demonstrates the important lessons of light and shade and their relationship to modelling. She accomplished the transitions from light to dark through the use of half-tones and was successful in creating a softly modelled study.

The lilies flying out of the dark background suggest that this painting was not done at school where the professor may have frowned on such a frivolous addition; and yet it is this very addition which dramatically provides the "effet". The problem of the "effet" was a complex one and underscores the necessity of working with the "bosse" as an intermediary stage prior to actual study of the live model.

Practically, the casts were easier and cheaper to obtain than live models. They could be readily moved about and once positioned would remain immobile for the long periods required for the student's painstaking efforts.

Historically, the casts presented the students with a lesson in the art of the antique world. The plaster casts were of original classical sculptures and architectural facades. There were public collections available for student study, such as those at the Victoria and Albert, the British Museum, the Cour Vitrée in the Palais des Études, and most ateliers had their own extensive collections of all shapes, sizes and kinds. The plaster casts were as prolific a teaching aid as are today's Kodachrome slides but they had a decided advantage in that they provided the scale of the original.

As well, the casts, with their smooth, reflective, white surfaces were an ideal medium to teach the student artist
about the concept of the "effet". Boime, in his text The Academy and French Painting, describes this as "the unified relations of planes of light and dark values". The "effet" was one of the essential concerns of nineteenth century academic artists and students were required to spend hours re-constructing gradations from light to dark in their academic exercises.

Sophie's oil sketch shows her student concern for the "effet". The major light source is off canvas upper-right and the darkest area is lower left. The brilliant highlights on the plaster cast's left shoulder, left cheek, and nose reflect the direct light source. Through a succession of half-tones from the high-lights to the areas in shadow, such as the neck under the chin and the right side of the turned face, Sophie has created a good sense of modelling. That is, the three-dimensionality of the plaster cast has been captured on the two-dimensional surface of the painted canvas. As mentioned above, the whimsical touch of the lilies underscores the "effet" as these believable splashes of light dance out of the dark gloom of the area in shadow.

Clearly, Sophie was making good progress in her studies and her talent, ambition and capacity for hard work were to be rewarded. In July of 1893 the Daily Colonist newspaper in Victoria carried the following notice:

"At the recent examinations of the Schools of Art at South Kensington, Miss Sophie Pemberton passed first in life, first in antique, and first in still life. In antique Miss Pemberton was the only student who obtained a first. These are the three highest examinations in art held at South Kensington .... It is always very gratifying
64 x 20 cm., Victoria: Private Collection
to hear of the successes of young Victorians competing for distinction in the old country."\textsuperscript{13}

The writer was correct in reporting her first class marks, however, she was not the only student to achieve first in antique. Still, considering that, of the more than one thousand candidates sitting for each examination, less than 7\% would receive firsts, Sophie was, indeed, obtaining "distinction in the old country."\textsuperscript{14}

No doubt her family was most impressed with her accomplishment. First in antique and still life was achievement enough; but a first in the life class was exceptional. Women had gained access to life classes only as recently as the early 1880's. Sophie was to maintain her high standing during the next couple of years and on the Examination in Drawing from Life, May 2, 1896 she again achieved a first class mark. Only 156 of the 1,228 candidates did so.

It should be pointed out that these marks which Sophie received were for the National Diploma in Design. The South Kensington School, established in 1853, was the pinnacle of a national art school system which, in 1864, included ninety provincial schools teaching 16,000 students whose objective was the N.D.D. By the end of the century this system had grown to three hundred schools teaching thousands of "dabbling fee paying amateurs."\textsuperscript{15}

By the 1880's this entire system was under severe attack and the critics noted that it was a "cultivation of those values which the local authorities could understand, and to nothing else."\textsuperscript{16} The South Kensington System, as it was known,
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was a self-perpetuating one which turned out its own teachers and administrators. On the other hand, the best students and most challenging teachers in England shunned this mediocrity and could be found at the Slade, or the Royal College of Art.

Sophie never attended either and thus did not benefit from the stimulating challenge of these more professional schools. Unfortunately there are no references or records which might clarify Sophie's choice of schools. Although she was to go on to the demanding routine of Julian's, and spent time at Whistler's studio, there is little evidence that Sophie associated with her more forward looking contemporaries. Her artistic efforts would reflect the more conservative path of the late nineteenth century academic tradition and only towards the end of her short professional career is there any evidence that she tried to surmount the restrictions of that dying tradition.

The pencil sketch Nude (Figure 3) shows us the kind of work for which she may have received her first class marks in drawing from life. This sketch represents the passing "à la nature" into the final area of academic instruction. Sophie's standing female figure is, in a number of ways, typical of the life drawings of the late nineteenth century. On the other hand, there are some qualities in this sketch which make it noteworthy.

Generally, the poses of the models were similar to the plaster casts and the student artist had little technical difficulty in transferring the early lessons she had learned to this final area of study. However, beyond the technical
facility of this transference there were two major difficulties to be overcome. The first was the more simple and involved a question of exposure. That is, the live, naked model required getting use to for both male and female students. Clearly, this problem would be more or less emotionally difficult depending on the background of the individual. The second difficulty was a complex one involving the perceptual and learning processes.

Up to this point in her academic training the student had made laborious copies of parts - heads, noses, hands, ears, eyes, busts, feet, and so on. Now the entire human body in its interrelated complexity had to be captured as a whole. Sophie has managed this task very well in her life drawing.

The model poses in typical frontality and the line of action is clearly evident. It starts with the shadowed left cheek, travels down between the model's breasts, through her navel, and descends along the out-thrust left leg. Sophie's use of the "estompe" has resulted in a soft, tactile quality of flesh in the drawing and she demonstrates a sound grasp of the whole as all the parts of the body relate in believable unity. More than this physical unity there is an important psychological integrity which sets Sophie's work apart from many nineteenth century nude sketches and drawings.

The expressive quality of the nude's face makes this an atypical study for its time. This effort on the part of the artist is a reach beyond the convention and may be a result of Sophie's identification as woman with the model. It is difficult to draw any conclusive opinion because Sophie left
no letters or journal describing her thoughts or feelings about this question. It would have been very difficult for Sophie to identify with her models because of the vast differences in socio-economic class, however, a basic identification as woman could well have been within Sophie's emotional range. Support for this argument may be seen in the differences to be noted between her commissioned portraits and her genre and family portraits. Further support comes from family members' memories of Sophie's ability to put shop keepers and service people at ease. One thing is eminently clear; at this stage in her training Sophie was well prepared for the final aspects of the third area of the academic curriculum.

Students at this stage were encouraged to maintain sketchbooks in which they executed small, rapid sketches of anything and everything going on around them. Sophie's sketchbooks from this period are filled with dozens of small "croquis" - quick drawings of a few lines which captured the unwitting subjects - usually people strolling on the boulevards or those sitting at the next table in a cafe. As well, these sketchbooks show that Sophie made many copies, large and small, of the Old Masters hanging in the Louvre and other Parisian galleries. Unfortunately these sketches are of fragments and cannot be identified.

The copying of Old Masters or special executions of the professor of the atelier represented the next to last stage in this long series constituting the academic lessons. Sophie's Boy with Grapes (Figure 4) is a good example of this kind of copying. Her painting is probably a copy of a minor Venetian
FIGURE 4. Boy with Grapes, n.d., Oil on Canvas
66 x 56 cm., Victoria: Private Collection
master. Both Flemish and Venetian masters were favored for copying because of their brushwork and coloration. Copying the Old Masters instilled some knowledge of Art History and taught the student about the technical elements of composition, form, color and so on. Sophie's painting, now in need of restoration, shows a competent use of oil paint as her flesh tones are good and she has admirably captured the quality of light reflecting off the rich variety of surfaces - from the material of the boy's clothing to the woven straw of the basket and the luscious skin of the grapes. Although her use of the medium is excellent her draftsmanship, usually a strong point in her student works, is uneven here. The lad's eyes require some greater attention and his lifeless right hand is poorly drawn.

The ultimate test of the developing student's skill was the "esquisse peinte". These last academic exercises were unfinished oil sketches. That is, they did not receive their final thin coats of oil glaze which would have given them the characteristic high-gloss surface of nineteenth century academic painting. Except for this finishing detail the "esquisse peinte" exemplified the full range of the academic curriculum. Sophie's oil sketch Mansi (Figure 5) may be an "esquisse peinte" executed while she was still attending school in England.

This sketch (from information on the canvas back) was painted in twenty-six days from October 31 to November 25, 1892. Although considerable attention went into the details and finish of the face, the dress and background are much more
loosely handled. It is this unfinished quality and the short time spent on the work which leads to speculation that it is indeed an "esquisse peinte". Also, the artist did not make her professional debut until 1897, with the acceptance of Daffodils at the Royal Academy, so this is clearly a student effort.

Of all her work known today, Mansi stands out as a remarkable testament to the artistic powers and skill which Sophie possessed at an early stage of her development. The vital quality of the model has been convincingly captured. Beyond the technical reality of her composition, Sophie portrays a believable personality. This is the ultimate test of the portraitist's talent and by the time Sophie finished her studies she was well prepared for a professional career.

Mansi, as an academic exercise, reveals the artist's concern for light, color, form, composition, mastery of the medium, and, as has been noted, persuasive portraiture. The model is directly lit from the upper left and Sophie carefully controlled the delicate flesh tones to present a voluptuous re-creation of the model's enviable complexion. The quiet intensity of the young woman's eyes give depth to what might have been another vacuous "pretty" face. From the highly finished surface of the skin to the more loosely handled bodice of the model's dress Sophie shows a sure handling of her palette and a competent mastery of brushwork.

Between 1893 and 1896 Sophie continued her studies at the Cape Nichol School and also made a number of trips home to Victoria. She worked hard, on these visits home, in the
tower studio at Gonzales until by 1895 she was ready to exhibit some paintings with the Art Association of Montreal. The Association secretary Mr. R. Lindsay, wrote her on March 2, 1895 saying that her "pictures having been hung in the Spring Exhibition, to commence on Wednesday, March 6. I have the pleasure to inform you that the Gallery will be open to Artists on Tuesday, March 5 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. for the purposes of varnishing etc." Her entries in the Spring Exhibition Catalogue, Sweet Seventeen and A Normandy Peasant were on sale for $25. each.

With three years of solid achievement behind her Sophie was now ready for the rigorous training available at the Académie Julian in Paris. Julian's was not a strange place for Canadian art students. J.W.L. Forster, G.A. Reid, R. Harris and many other aspiring Canadians had passed through one or another of the ateliers making up this distinguished Académie. Julian, a highly colorful individual, apparently knew little of the arts. He was, however, a shrewd businessman and had persuaded some well-known painters and sculptors to act as visiting professors. In its day, the Académie Julian was second in size and reputation only to the Beaux-Arts. Bouguereau, Lefevre, Constant, Doucet and Laurens were amongst the better known artists visiting the studios to offer criticism of the aspiring students' work.

Although there is a reasonable body of information as to Sophie's activities as a student artist in Paris, there are still many unanswered questions. For example, I have found no references to any of her social or personal activities.
FIGURE 5. Mansi, 1892, Oil on Canvas
45.5 x 35.5 cm., Victoria: Private Collection
No doubt she had friends and acquaintances with whom she socialized, however, it is more likely that they were from her own social circle or class. It is difficult to visualize Sophie associating with bohemian art students or frequenting the cheap cafés which were favorites with many of the young students.

Rather, like Marie Bashkirtseff, a few years before her, Sophie may well have spent her leisure time at the Bois or in the smart cafés of the Champs Elysées. As well, there must have been many trips to the École des Beaux Arts - where the annual Prix de Rome could be seen - and to the many museums and galleries of Paris.

Similarly, there are no existing references to any artists or stimulating students with whom Sophie may have associated or admired. It is this consistent isolation from the artistic community which marks Sophie's career - both during her student days and as a professional. A marked contrast with the careers of artists like Cassatt or Carr immediately comes to mind. Both of these artists enjoyed an immensely fruitful contact with vigorous and progressive artists which dramatically affected their own artistic and creative vision. Perhaps, had Sophie enjoyed a similar experience, her story would be quite different.

Sophie was to study in the ateliers of J.P. Laurens and Benjamin Constant. Under their tutelage she began an extensive program of exhibiting her art. In 1897, at twenty-eight, Sophie made her public debut as a mature artist and her
painting *Daffodils* was given a prominent position at the Royal Academy Exhibition. A Vancouver newspaper noted:

"Those of us who take any interest in anything but dollars and mining shares are delighted by the news that three of those we know have found a place this year in the Academy. Miss Sophie Pemberton has fulfilled some of the promise of her childhood and those who remember the extremely strong studies which used to decorate her mother's house in Victoria will not be surprised to hear that a large picture by her has been awarded an honourable position in Room 1 at the Royal Academy's Exhibition of pictures in London." \(^{22}\)

Sophie's work caught the attention of a number of English critics and there were mixed reports about her efforts:

"A large picture, *Daffodils*, by Miss Sophie T. Pemberton, is both unusual and clever. The figure of the seated girl, who stoops to pick up one of the flowers from the floor, is well drawn and the lines are graceful and pleasing." \(^{23}\)

Another writer suggested that *Daffodils* was a "conscientious piece of work, but scarcely worthy, as a subject, of the labour and talent bestowed on it." \(^{24}\)

During these last few years of the nineteenth century Sophie continued studying at Julian's while her work was regularly on view, particularly in England. In 1897 she had paintings on exhibit in the Western Exhibition, Clifford's Art Gallery and the Corporation Art Gallery in Brighton.

In 1898 her canvas *Little Boy Blue* (Figure 6) was accepted by the Royal Academy. A newspaper in Vancouver was sparing with its coverage:

"British Columbia is not unrepresented in the Royal Academy again this year - another picture by Miss S.T. Pemberton having been accepted. Two more pictures by the same artist were to be seen at the recent exhibition of the '91 Art Club held at the Modern Gallery." \(^{23}\)
An English critic at least ventured an opinion:

"Miss Sophie Pemberton shows French influence in *Little Boy Blue* in which the colour is nicely felt; the modelling of the head is good and the flesh tones are soft and pure."26

This same year Sophie exhibited a canvas, now missing, called *Winding Yarns*. This canvas was seen at the 91 Art Club Exhibition, the Manchester Art Gallery, and the Birmingham Society of Artists' Exhibition. Critics writing in the local papers were again divided:

"Another large canvas is reproduced in little in *Winding Yarns*; this is the work of Miss S.T. Pemberton, who has succeeded in making an effective picture. The two old women are tenderly painted, and the mass of fruit piled up on their stall behind them gives brightness to the composition."27

Another writer was gently critical:

"In spite of many merits of arrangement and colour, we could wish that Miss Sophie T. Pemberton would handle her brush with a little more firmness - modelling of the two women's heads is apt to be a little 'woolly', though the picture *Winding Yarns* (295) is certainly pleasant and interesting as a whole."28

Sophie's growing commitment to her profession may be reflected in this heightened activity. Her dedication and hard work were to be rewarded. In March of 1899 Sophie achieved the signal honor of winning the Prix Julian for portraiture. She was the first woman to be so honored.

This prize (gold medal and 100 francs) was awarded annually to the finest student work from the numerous ateliers of the Académie Julian. The competition was open to both men and woman students and her personal sense of satisfaction must have been doubly profound. Firstly, she had, in some measure, succeeded in the still predominantly masculine enclave of the art world. Secondly, she had received honorable mention
on three competitions during the preceding years which surely must have sharpened her appetite for victory.\textsuperscript{29} Indeed, Sophie treasured her "Paris medal" and she carefully cut out the announcement of winners from The Gazette des Beaux Arts magazine for inclusion in her "glory book".\textsuperscript{30}

The papers in British Columbia were, again, sparing in their coverage of Sophie's achievement:

"Miss S.T. Pemberton has distinguished herself in Paris where she has been working for the last six months at the Julian Studios. She won the gold medal there competed for by all the students both male and female, and her picture - 'Boy Blue' - has also been accepted by the Salon with honourable mention.\textsuperscript{31}

The last year of the nineteenth century was a most fruitful one for the thirty year old Sophie. She had successfully completed her studies, emerged as an accomplished and professional artist, and achieved an honor never before accorded a member of her sex. The future seemed bright and full of promise.

Contemporary newspaper accounts provide various reports of Miss Pemberton's efforts. Her masterful portrait of Bibi la Purée (Figure 7) was exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1900. Originally this painting was entitled simply Portrait but as the Parisian dailies indicate, the model was widely known.\textsuperscript{32}

For example, a writer in Le Pays Latin commented:

"... un portrait de Bibi la Purée par Pemberton; ce dernier portrait est d'un coloris sur? et expert, mais nous donne une impression inexacte due personnage car nous acceptons mal l'idée d'une bague de prix au doigt d'un tel misereux bien connu au Quartier latin. L'artiste aurait mieux fait de supprimer cette bague."\textsuperscript{33}

Writers for Figaro, Libre Parole and Radical made passing references to Sophie's accomplished canvas.\textsuperscript{34}
FIGURE 6. Little Boy Blue, 1897, Oil on Canvas
76 x 51 cm., Art Gallery of Gr. Victoria
Sophie continued painting and she had another large canvas ready for the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1901. *Interested*, (Figure 8) a life-size portrait study of two young women was accepted by the Royal Academy. A very brief mention appeared in the *Ladies Field*:

"In the First Gallery at Burlington House there are not many pictures by women painters... and there is some careful work in the large picture of two girls reading by the fire, *Interested*, by Miss Sophie Pemberton."

A reporter for the *Colonist*, suddenly galvanized, went on at great length about Sophie and her efforts in an article entitled "On the ladder of Fame: A Victorian at the Royal Academy in London".

"The opening of the Royal Academy in London, on the 1st of May, is one of the most distinguished and special annual events to herald the season. On that day the fashionable world assembles to view the works of those artists who are so exceedingly fortunate as to have them accepted, for 'many are called but few are chosen' from the ranks of the many aspirants who are ambitious to complete in the wonderful exhibition. As the catalogue is scanned, and the names are observed of such celebrities as Sir Alma Tadema, R.A., J. Sant, R.A., J.S. Sargent, R.A., etc., it is with a spontaneous thrill of pride one spies amid this array of talent that of a dear fellow countrywoman who is rapidly gaining her crown of laurels.

The oil painting called *Interested*, by Miss Sophie Pemberton, possesses great merit, and has been highly praised by the most capable critics. As one enters Gallery No. 1, with senses fresh and keen to enjoy the artistic feast in store, this large picture, hanging in an excellent position on the right wall, at once arrests attention. We draw near for a closer inspection and become indeed 'interested' in the delightfully charming subject - so typical of 'The Good, the True and the Beautiful' - which shines out in the sweet fresh faces of the two girls who are sitting side by side in a cosy chimney corner, intently 'interested' in a book. It is a peep into a happy home. The fire is ablaze in the open grate, and shedding its soft glow on all around.

The high mantel, of a dull brown shade, is relieved by several ornaments, and an embroidered piece of silk of
a vivid rose colour, is draped from one end - all forming a striking background to the two girls one a blonde, the other a brunette.

The latter is holding a book with easy grace on her lap, her knees crossed and a well-shaped foot resting with abandon upon a blue velvet cushion. The other girl leans a sweet, fair face on her hand in pensive attitude, the elbow resting upon her other hand across the knee. Both are clad in soft, clingling empire gowns of white silk of a bluish tint, and a transparent fichu of chiffon - falling in graceful folds about the shoulders of the dark-haired girl and loosely across her arm. A delicate tracery of bow knots finishes the hem of the gown. They form a charmingly delightful contrast to each other, as lovely and distinct types of beauty, while the expression upon their faces, in the delicate coloring and exquisite warmth of feeling which only a master touch can bestow, presents to us on that whilom cold canvas, the living breathing reality. The light and shade on the folds of the gown are admirable, while the firelight 'dances and gleams' on the lovely forms of the maidens and lingers caressingly on their youthful brows.

All congratulations to Miss Pemberton for her masterpiece - this chef d'oeuvre of art - and well may the far-off city in the West be proud of the young artist who is so unostentatiously winning her way to fame and honor in the art centre - the greatest capital in the world." \[37\]

With profuse wordiness the Colonist newspaper seemed, in some measure, to be making up for previously stingy comments about British Columbia's accomplished young artist. Sophie returned to Victoria for the remainder of 1901 and managed to do some teaching besides continuing her own work. By early 1902 she assembled a charity exhibition of her recent work which the Victoria public attended.

"The people of Victoria will have today and tomorrow the unprecedented opportunity of seeing at home some pictures that have been deemed worthy of a place in the Royal Academy, the Paris Salon and other art exhibits in Europe. Miss Sophie Pemberton, the talented artist, whose work is on exhibition in Waitt's Hall, is a Victorian by birth. She intends returning to Europe at an early day and has very kindly placed some of her pictures on exhibition. A small admission fee will be charged, and the receipts will go to the R.E. Church. To be able to see pictures of such merit is an advantage, which all
who are interested in art, and especially students of painting should utilize. A pleasing feature of the exhibition is the fact that Miss Pemberton gives the people of Victoria an opportunity of seeing her two latest important works, 'John-o-Dreams', and 'The Twilight of the Lilies'. These pictures will be submitted to the Royal Academy and the Paris Salon.

In addition to these are a few delicious landscapes in water colours, and visitors will regret that there are not more of them. Some portraits of well known Victorians, which will give every one a chance to form their own opinion of Miss Pemberton's skill in portraiture and some studies in flowers and faces. (sic) The whole make up an exceedingly attractive exhibit."

Sophie's plans for an early return to Europe were thwarted by ill health. Perhaps the intensive painting activity and inter-continental travel of the past few years combined to sap her strength. The exact nature of her illness is not clear, however, she travelled to California for treatment of an affliction in her legs. She was having difficulty walking and spent time in Paso Robles taking the waters. By mid-February, 1902, she wrote to her friend Flora Burns saying that:

"I am better too. It is not such a tremendous effort to walk a few steps and I don't walk much as they told me not to . . . I grow stouter daily and with the water drinking and treatment we have quite nice complexions."39

Nearly a month later she was still having problems and wrote:

"It is Sunday afternoon and I won't paint. I can't walk and my eyes are tired to read, and so, instead of honouring the Sabbath with a sacred vacancy of mind I am going to write."40

Her letters remained surprisingly cheerful in light of the seriousness of her ailment. On March 25, 1902 she wrote:

". . . and I could not stay at home without someone as maid and model, as they say I shall not be really well for a year. But I have walked 6 telegraph poles - 600 yards - about 1/3 of the distance to your house."41
FIGURE 7. Bibi la Purée, 1900, Oil on Canvas
23.5 x 61 cm., Art Gallery of Gr. Victoria
Sophie's indomitable willpower, instrumental in winning her battles with her friends and the art world, was as strong as ever and with the strength she had she painted.

"We have had perfect weather and June-blue skies. I have been painting down by the river ... they say an artist has the choice between roses and mud and I seem to find both there. But the last few days I have spent between the bath house and bed - a sad waste of time."

Her recovery was long and painful and, perhaps, never complete. But, by the end of the year she was well enough to travel and she and her mother left for Europe. Early in October, 1902 they sailed on the Dominion Line's S.S. Commonwealth from Boston. Their journeys took them around the continent and finally to Italy. They were in Rome for Christmas and in spite of continued delicate health Sophie sought out models and painted as much as possible.

"This week I've been in bed two days - not ill - but not well. I haven't done much. We had one model - a dear old woman with quiet eyes - different to the ordinary type of model here. I followed her out of the train and asked her to pose. She came next day with her whole family - her grown up son and daughter, daughter's fiance and a cousin. They all sat in a row and we painted. They wouldn't take tea so we got them wine and biscuits."

As well as keeping up with her painting Sophie was learning Italian. Her letters refer to various models she befriended and on December 29 she described yet another of the many people who posed for her.

"And now we are painting a dear old woman. She thinks us 'buone e belle' (good and beautiful) and is punctual. But models are so hard to find unless one takes the dressed up street model. They know us now, unfortunately, to be artists and follow us with bad English, 'do paint me picture' etc. . . ."

By mid-April Sophie left Rome for London via Paris. On May 10, 1903 she arrived in London under a "leaden sky and
drizzle of rain". She rejoined her mother who had arrived earlier and then spent time in re-establishing both social and professional contacts. By early summer she was investigating future business and one letter to her friend in Victoria describes a potential commission:

"Today I went by appointment to see Lord Strathcona . . . he saw the photos of my pictures and is coming to the studio with his wife and daughter some day." 45

Work was suspended though, while the elderly Mrs. Pemberton and her daughter travelled through France for the summer. Most of Sophie's time was taken up attending her ill-tempered mother who found nothing right and complained constantly. Quarrels with the hired help were smoothed over by the diplomatic daughter who wrote:

"Mother hasn't been feeling well. The excellent custom of beginning dinner with melon disagreed with her and waiters and maids find her very trying and I have to follow with soothing words and tips." 46

They took in the sights of Caen, Bayeux, Jumièges and travelled along the Seine. Between sightseeing and caring for her mother Sophie sketched and did some painting. They continued touring France until the end of November and then Mrs. Pemberton decided they should return to Italy. Sophie was elated:

"We are really leaving for Italy on Friday. I am wild with joy as you may imagine it has been so dull here doing nothing - and such weather and cold rooms." 47

With her mother and younger sister Susie, Sophie settled for the winter in Florence. She resumed her studies of Italian and spent much time reading and memorizing Dante. Her letters are filled with accounts of the theatre, the excellent cuisine,
FIGURE 8. Interested, 1901, Oil on Canvas
166.3 x 108 cm., Art Gallery of Gr. Victoria
and the galleries and museums they visited. There are few references to any serious painting and in January she wrote to Mrs. Burns:

"If I were a better artist I should paint you as I dream of you as 'Flora' - with the four attendant golden angel heads. But much of one's life only passes in day dreams - and too much of mine."

Time was beginning to slip by and Sophie seems to have been suddenly more aware of her artistic inactivity. January is often a time to take stock of one's accomplishments and make plans for the future. Given the unsettled nature of travelling about and being largely responsible for her aging mother, it is further testimony to Sophie's commitment to her art that she achieved what she did in 1903.

Two canvases, *John-o-Dreams*, (Figure 9) and *Spring* (Figure 10) had been submitted to the Royal Academy and accepted. Also, the painting *Interested* was retitled *Un Livre Ouvert* and was accepted at the Salon Exhibition. The *Colonist* newspaper carried its usual terse report:

"Victorian Honored - Miss Sophia T. Pemberton has two pictures exhibited this year, one in the Academy and the other in the Salon. Both pictures were painted out here last summer. The one in the Academy is *John-o-Dreams*, and is illustrated in the Academy notes for the year. The picture exhibited in the Salon is *Un Livre Ouvert*."  

It is ironic that the reporter, in so few lines, should be so incorrect. The paintings were not painted in the summer of 1902 and there is no mention of the fact that Sophie had two paintings accepted at the Academy! Sophie fared better with the reporter from the *Newcastle Weekly*:

"Two pictures worthy of attention are painted by Miss Sophie Pemberton. One of them is entitled 'John-o-Dreams', and shows a young girl reading to a boy, evidently her
younger brother. She is seated on the grass, and he reclines before her, his thoughts seemingly carried far away by what he hears her read. The other picture is called 'Spring' and gives us a representation of a young girl seated on the grass in an orchard, 'in maiden meditation, fancy free', dreaming over a lapful of spring flowers she has culled."

Womanhood referred to "'John-o-Dreams', by Sophie Pemberton, (as) a striking picture of a peasant boy and girl loitering in a field. The far-away expression in the eyes of the boy gives the picture its title." Lady's Pictorial followed suit with its comment that "Miss Sophie Pemberton's 'John-o-Dreams' gives us two figures in a field, the girl reading, her companion listening with wide open, wonder-laden eyes. The colour in this canvas is pleasant, as is its sunny effect."

There were similar short notices in the Parisian dailies about Sophie's painting Un Livre Ouvert which had been accepted in the Salon's Spring Exhibition. The Gazette de France notes the last minute inclusion of her "interesting composition":

"Ainsi, dans la salle I, justement, les fillettes sans soucis de Max Bohm on été remplacées à la dernière minute par une composition intéressante de Mlle. Pemberton - 'Un Livre Ouvert'."

The critic for the Journal des Débâts was gracious in his comments about Sophie's painting:

"Mlle. Sophie Pemberton, 'Un Livre Ouvert', deux jeunes filles lisant près d'une cheminée. Peinture tout à fait gracieuse de composition et d'expression, habilement et harmonieusement peinte et d'une jolie couleur."

Another writer had no firm opinion and felt that Un Livre Ouvert "me paraît bien, mais le tableau est plein d'embu, il est donc difficile de le juger." Finally, someone writing for Européen suggested that "Mlle. Pemberton est très dans las tradition américaine avec 'Un Livre Ouvert'." Sophie
may well have been surprised by the latter's comment considering the time, money and effort she had expended to acquire the latest European training - only to be judged firmly in the "American tradition".

The English and French newspaper references to her work must have warmed Sophie's heart. It should be remembered that of the thousands of paintings submitted to the Academy and Salon Exhibitions there were hundreds selected for display. To have one's work noticed amongst those hundreds, stacked virtually from floor to ceiling in more than half a dozen galleries was no mean achievement.

The achievements of 1903 were, however, a kind of reaffirmation of her earlier work. Un Livre Ouvert and John-o-Dreams were more than two years old. Although their critical acclaim was rewarding, Sophie must have been anxious to get down to some new painting. She filled numerous sketch books with ideas for paintings, drawings of people she saw and endless little fragmentary copies of the Renaissance masters she admired in the galleries of Europe during this long year of travelling with her mother. These fragments remain unidentifiable. They remained in England for the opening of the 1904 Royal Academy Exhibition and her masterful portrait of Bibi, renamed Verlaine's Friend for the English audience, was hung "on the line" in the Spring show.

The London Illustrated News referred to a number of outstanding paintings in the Exhibition and made particular mention of Sophie Pemberton "whose 'Verlaine's Friend' is quietly impressive." The Lloyds newspaper critic suggested
FIGURE 9. John-o-Dreams, 1902, Oil on Canvas, 95 x 128 cm., Art Gallery of Gr. Victoria
that "Verlaine's Friend' presents a noble face charged with melancholy thought, excellently painted."\(^{58}\) The Daily Mail stated that although ". . . few things worthy of note are to be found in the five last rooms . . . among them are . . . Miss Pemberton's Verlaine's Friend."\(^{59}\)

Ladies Field pointed out that "the most striking painting from a feminine brush is a curious, clever study of a man's head, Verlaine's Friend, by Miss Sophie Pemberton."\(^{60}\) The critic for Truth felt Sophie's painting deserved "much more attention":

"There is a picture called Verlaine's Friend by Miss Sophie Pemberton which deserves much more attention than it has yet received. Whoever that friend of Verlaine may be that the artist has painted, the likeness is a faithful one, I feel confident. Few portraits in the Exhibition show a stronger individuality. And yet it is accorded a position by no means so favourable as it deserves."\(^{61}\)

Finally, the writer for Womanhood waxed poetic about Verlaine's Friend and, contrary to the French critic's opinion, judged her firmly in the "French realistic school".

"Sophie Pemberton must be congratulated on the remarkable success of her effort, 'Verlaine's Friend'; the ivory yellow face lined with pain, the strained worn eyes, the gnarled hands resting heavily upon a stick, stand out in strong relief from the dull hues of the clothing. Miss Pemberton has evidently studied in the French realistic school, to which she certainly does credit."\(^{62}\)

Sometime in the spring of 1904 Mrs. Pemberton and her two daughters returned to Victoria. Sophie busied herself in the tower studio with the many sketches she had made while travelling in Europe and prepared a number of paintings. She exhibited them, at the end of that summer, in the Victoria Agricultural Show and caused a stir amongst the local
The Colonist newspaper carried the following extensive report:

"Visitors to the Victoria agricultural show this year have a great treat in store for them, when they carefully examine the collection of pictures exhibited by Miss Sophie Pemberton in the gallery of the main building. Those who remember seeing some few years ago an exhibition of this talented young artist's work will be struck by the marvelous progress she has made in the last few years.

The collection at present on view consists of some thirty oil paintings, representing some of her later work; many of the pictures have been exhibited in the Royal Academy and Salon, as well as provincial exhibitions in England. Besides these larger and more ambitious works, there are some most charming studies in water color of the native flowers of British Columbia, which may from their association appeal to the taste of some more nearly than perhaps the foreign subjects."

The critic, writing for Progress, commented on the inadequate facilities at the Fair and offered a rather more critical assessment of Sophie's paintings:

"It is a pleasure to congratulate the management of the Agricultural Association upon the increased prominence given in this year's exhibition to art treasures and the artistic element, the collection in oils of Miss Sophie T. Pemberton being to very many the great attraction of the fair, but their satisfaction being crowned by the discovery that in miniatures by Miss Ethel Webling there had been provided subjects for even more enthusiastic and unqualified admiration. Unhappily neither Miss Pemberton's nor Miss Webling's pictures enjoy a light in which they can be seen to any advantage. Probably there was no quarter of the exhibition designed for the acceptable presentation of such treasures. Handicapped by insufficient and ill-placed light the pictures naturally lose half their charm. They are, however, distinctly worthy of a visit and of inspection in any light, and 'Progress' can but advise those who have not yet seen them not to allow today to pass without taking advantage of the last remaining opportunity.

With respect to Miss Pemberton's pictures, 'Progress' cannot share the general and unqualified enthusiasm of many. They assuredly show much breadth, sympathy, impressionistic skill, and facility in vivid coloring. But they do not carry their stories direct to the heart, defying criticism and analysis. In portraiture and figure painting Miss Pemberton is most successful, although her
symbolic 'Spring' and 'Autumn' are very admirable compositions, exhibiting none of the faults which might be picked in 'John-o-Dreams'."

A month later, from October 21 to 28, this same exhibition was presented to the Vancouver public at the studio of James Blomfield. The Daily News Advertiser carried notices about the forthcoming exhibition for a week before its opening:

"Miss Pemberton, of Victoria, a talented member of one of the foremost families of the Province, who has won recognition in the most exclusive artistic circles of the Old World, will exhibit at the studio of Mr. James Blomfield, Room 39, Fairfield Building for a few days beginning Friday next. One of Miss Pemberton's most famous pictures, an Academy picture, by the way, is 'John-o-Dreams'. This will be on exhibition among others."

"To-morrow the paintings of Miss Pemberton of Victoria will be on view at the studio of Mr. James Blomfield, Room 39, Fairfield Building. The public will be admitted free. One of the most charming of the collection is the noted picture 'John-o-Dreams'. Miss Pemberton's high reputation as an artist in London and Paris will ensure all art-lovers of Vancouver seizing this opportunity to see her work."

"The exhibition of the paintings of Miss Pemberton, of Victoria, will be on view for a week, beginning today, at the studio of Mr. James Blomfield, 39 Fairfield Building, Granville Street. Art connoisseurs will seize this opportunity of enjoying the charming work of a young lady who has already made her name in England and France by her exhibits at the Royal Academy, New and Grosvenor Galleries and at the Salon."

The exhibition was well received by the Vancouver public and this favorable response was reflected in the comments by the newspaper critics.

"It is not for the ordinary woman to criticise the work of such a true artist as Miss Sophie T. Pemberton. I can admire, discriminate between what I like well and what I like best, but beyond that it can only fall to my lot to advise other Vancouverites to visit the studio of Mr. James Blomfield, in the Fairfield Building, and enjoy as I did last week the treat of seeing so many of the works of Miss Pemberton, a young artist of whom all British Columbians are vastly and justly proud."
FIGURE 10. Spring, 1902, Oil on Canvas, 100.5 x 142.5 cm., Art Gallery of Gr. Victoria
In this exhibition, which will be open free to the public all this week, 'John-o-Dreams' will at once attract visitors to the studio. It is a fine piece of work, and was exhibited in the London Royal Academy in 1903 and the Paris Salon in 1902. Two other large pictures which will appeal to the general public are 'Spring' and 'Autumn', also 'A Chelsea Pensioner'. 'A Rural Philosopher' is a splendid portrait, but far and away the gem of the whole collection, to my way of thinking, is No. 33, 'A Study'. In this picture of a young girl's head against a background of white flowers, the reflections are marvellous and the flesh tones are excellent. A purchaser could not do better than secure this lovely work of art.

All the pictures in the exhibition are for sale, and a catalogue of names and prices is procurable at the studio.

The pictures have been most cleverly hung for Miss Pemberton by Mr. James Blomfield."

Another writer was most thorough in his article about Sophie's exhibition and described, at length, her qualities as an artist:

"An unusual opportunity is furnished to lovers of art in Vancouver during the remainder of this and the opening of next week, in the privilege of viewing the paintings of Miss Sophie Pemberton, of Victoria, which will be on view in the studio of Mr. James Blomfield, No. 39 Fairfield Block, from October 21 to 28.

Miss Pemberton is a native of Victoria who is by nature highly gifted in the realm of art. She has the natural gift, which is an absolute necessity to the attainment of success in her chosen calling, to a marvellous degree. Added to this she has most zealously and earnestly toiled in her efforts to make for herself a name that shall rank high among artists. To that end she has studied in the ateliers of the leading painters of Paris, gaining from their instruction that delicacy of touch and exquisite beauty which marks the French school. Having completed her studies there she spent some time in Rome under the best instructors that could be secured, and there in the home of the old masters she received all the training of the Italian school, rich in resources, could give her. Such earnestness and fidelity to art surely deserves success.

And Miss Pemberton has certainly won that which she sought. At a private view of the paintings yesterday many, indeed, were the words of praise, not mere empty meaningless phrases
from the lips of the ignorant, but honest commendations from connoisseurs of art which came to her.

Thirty-four canvasses are displayed by Miss Pemberton, the work on which has covered several years. Added to these are a number of water colors of flora and of views about Victoria and the Sound. It would be impossible to enumerate all of these; hence we glance at but a few.

Her best work, in all probability, from every point of view, is 'John-o-Dreams' - a delightful pastoral study. In this painting Miss Pemberton shows at her best the artistic soul within her. There is the human touch, indescribable, in the faces of the two figures portrayed and the glamor of delicacy that charms and pleases. This painting was exhibited by the artist at the Salon of 1892; again at the Royal Academy (London) in 1903 and at Newcastle-on-Tyne at the beginning of the present year.

A smaller canvas will be the centre of attraction to many discerning lovers of art. This is 'A Chelsea Pensioner', which was exhibited at Manchester in 1903. The artist has been thoroughly in sympathy with her subject and gives the 'old age' touch to the portrait of the soldier of other days with rare skill.

Two large companion paintings, 'Spring' and 'Autumn', are fine specimens of art, indeed. The coloring schemes in both of these are most appropriate and well wrought out. A figure that might be placed as a companion to 'A Chelsea Pensioner' is 'A Rural Philosopher' first exhibited in 1898. Here the artist delineates to well nigh perfection a study of a farmer of Southern England. Another study of like character and well worthy of high mention is that of 'A Roman Peasant'.

The canvasses on view are mostly figure subjects. A few interiors, however, are given, among which is a particular gem, 'S. Clemente, Rome'. In this picture by skilful use of the brush, the artist has attained light effects that mark this picture above the ordinary, and will make it especially noted during the exhibition. A number of the studies are from the neighborhood of Cundebec, Normandy.

The water colors which are shown are few in number but they show the artist to be a very able exponent of the modern school of this branch of art. There is the 'touch' and 'go' in them, not the mere laborious studied efforts, but the skill and confidence as shown in effects wrought by a single stroke of the brush.
Miss Pemberton was conceded by a prominent artist who has viewed her works and is capable of judging, to be an artist of very large calibre, capable of great things. In all her paintings, there is shown a strength that is masculine and bold. There is no weakness nor wavering evident in the least degree. This strength and firmness is evident both in her conception of the ideas she chooses to portray and the method by which she treats them.

Added to this, she has the faculty of harmoniously blending colors so as to obtain best effects from what would at the hands of some result in hapless incongruities. This faculty is evidenced in her paintings to a marked degree. Her schemes and daring are striking and yet are harmonized with the most excellent effect.

Miss Pemberton will doubtless win high praises for her works as they are exhibited, but it is to be remembered that she has already been the recipient of honors in the old world."

The Province newspaper also reviewed her work favorably and Sophie's reply to the reporter's question raised eyebrows in Victoria:

"Are the people of Vancouver giving you much encouragement, Miss Pemberton?"

"Oh yes, I think there is far more interest in pictures here than there is in Victoria. I have been quite impressed at the appreciation my work has received here."

The Province reporter continued:

"This was but natural. After all, we are more cosmopolitan than our friends in Isolatia - we beg pardon - on the Island." "

Today's rivalry between the two cities appears to have a lengthy tradition.

Sophie remained in Victoria for the rest of 1904 and continued painting. By the spring of 1905 she was again in the papers:

"Mrs. Pemberton entertained a large number of friends at 'Gonzales' on Wednesday afternoon. The hostess was assisted in looking after her guests by Miss Pemberton and Miss Sophie Pemberton, the latter of whom had her
FIGURE 11. Sir Henri Joly de Lotbinière, 1906
Oil on Canvas, 118 x 76 cm., Archives of British Columbia.
many splendid paintings on view. The paintings were
greatly admired, and those who were fortunate enough
to be present enjoyed a rare treat.”

Sophie, besides functioning as a dutiful daughter at her
mother’s social affairs, was receiving commissions from the
upper class members of the capital city. In February, 1905
an important commission came to her from the B.C. Natural
History Society.

The Colonist carried this report:

"An exceedingly well attended meeting of the British
Columbia Natural History Society was held last evening
in the 'caucus room' at the parliament buildings, the
president, Captain Walbran, being in the chair. After
due consideration it was decided by the meeting to
commission Miss Pemberton to paint the portrait of the
late John Fannin, which is to be placed in the provincial
museum by the Fannin memorial committee.”

Six weeks later the Colonist commented on the artist's progress
which had been reported to the regular meeting of the Natural
History Society:

"At the regular meeting of the Natural History Society
on Monday evening, President Captain Walbran being chair-
man, the memorial committee reported that the portrait
of the late John Fannin, painted by Miss Pemberton, was
progressing toward completion and would worthily commem-
orate the late curator in the scene of his useful activ-
ities.”

Nearly a month later the portrait was finished and the
Colonist reporter commented on its installation at the entrance
to the provincial museum:

"A strikingly fine portrait, executed in oil, of the late
John Fannin has just been hung at the entrance to the
museum at the parliament buildings. Three-quarters life
size, and framed in massive oak, it at once catches the eye
of the visitor to the room which holds so many specimens
of the handiwork of the deceased and is pronounced, by
those who knew him best in life, to be a very faithful
likeness. The picture was painted by Miss S.T. Pemberton,
to the order of the Natural History Society, and is a
conspicuous example of the highly artistic powers of a painter who has more than a local reputation."

One of "those who knew him best" paid Sophie a high compliment, indeed, with his observations about the portrait and portraiture in general:

"The portrait of John Fannin which has been presented to the Government as a memorial of his work as a naturalist in this Province, is now finished and placed on the wall of the museum lobby. It was decided by the Natural History Society that a local artist should be commissioned to paint this picture and their choice fell on Miss S.T. Pemberton who has already received recognition of her merit from without, her pictures having been accepted and hung both by the Royal Academy and the French Salon. We think that there can be but one opinion as to the wisdom of the selection. It is a very difficult thing to paint the portrait of a well known person in a way which will please everybody. To no two individuals does a third, probably, look alike even when living and present, still less is it probable that their recollection of him will be the same. Besides, though few people have much artistic training, everyone reasonably has an opinion as to how a picture should be painted, for they expect those qualities of handling and tone which they have learned to approve of in some favorite work with which they are well acquainted. And, failing these, they are not readily prepared to admire excellencies unfamiliar to them. It is for these reasons we believe so many portraits of eminent persons do not give general satisfaction, though the work of artists of acknowledged ability. But sometimes, either from a peculiar sympathy with the sitter, or from some other cause, a picture is produced which, apart from all questions of technique, presents so broad and dignified a conception of character, so faithful an interpretation of the personality that criticism and nothing but satisfaction is left. These are the great portraits which have made the memory of men to live for ages after the special knowledge of their achievements has ceased to be of interest. Perhaps it would be unwise and extravagant praise to bestow upon any post-mortem portrait the epithet great, yet when we stood in front of this sober and sincere presentiment of the honest laborer in the fields of scientific research we knew so well as 'Jack Fannin', we could not help being impressed by the idea that in some indefinable way his spirit had possessed the artist and told her of himself as he would wish the world to know him."
With a talent for portraiture and the fortunate social connection she enjoyed through her family, Sophie seemed destined for a promising career as a portrait artist. Indeed, she executed a number of commissioned portraits for the upper-class members of British Columbia's capital city and also a number for wealthy, aristocratic patrons in England. However, an examination of these portraits suggests that the artist did not do her best work under the condition of the patron/artist relationship.

The portrait of Sir Henri Gustave Joly de Lotbinière (Figure 11) is an example. Sir Henri, one-time Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, appears rather wooden and reminds the viewer of Mme. Tussaud's wax creations. There can be no faulting Sophie for her draftsmanship, use of color, composition, and so on. However, beyond the technical competence of this portrait there is no believable psychological depth. There is no sparkle of life in Sir Henri's eyes. The stilted quality of this portrait is all the more apparent when it is compared to the portrait of Mansi or the Nude.

In all fairness, as Piper has pointed out:

"The general conclusion on the art of portraiture must be that it is very closely controlled by its conventions. The patterns of the conventions go hand in hand with those of biography, beginning with that most enduring form, the memorial, the monumental inscription, the obituary notice, with purposes commemorative, hagiographical, and didactic. Such portraits comprise, as it were, a resonant catalogue of their subject's virtues an indication of their earthly achievements, and none of their shortcomings."

But even with allowances made for the close control of conventions in Edwardian portraiture this painting is hardly a
"resonant catalogue" of Sir Henri's virtues.

This stiff and wooden quality, apparent in a number of Sophie's commissioned portraits, is noticeably absent in her genre paintings and portraits of close family members. Her commissions are characterized by a strictly academic quality and are exceedingly conservative. She seems to have been very conscious of the responsibility involved and reverts to the letter of her academic lessons. It may be that she was somewhat intimidated by her illustrious patrons and was thereby prevented from doing her best work. More likely, her heart was simply not in this kind of effort which represents a small part of her known artistic output.

During these years, from the late 1890's to 1905 Sophie executed numerous family portraits and genre paintings. In these works she appears much more sympathetic to her sitters and they stand in marked contrast to her commissioned portraits. As might be expected, her family pictures are much less formal in treatment and seem more alive. They strike the viewer with their warm, personal quality. Her portrait of her mother Mrs. J.D. Pemberton (Figure 12) is an example. In this painting Sophie ably portrays the handsome, stern Victorian lady who was the epitome of the vanishing nineteenth century landed upper-class. Sophie, the artist, has carefully recorded the real physical presence of this autocratic woman. Sophie, the daughter, shows the viewer a warm, matronly side of Mrs. Pemberton. Thus, the complexity of this woman has been captured and we can admire the psychological presence of this portrait in a way which is impossible with that of Sir Henri.
FIGURE 12. Mrs. J.D. Pemberton, 1897, Oil on Canvas, 61 x 50.5 cm., Victoria: Private Collection.
Similarly, the painting *Italian Peasant Woman* (Figure 13) shows a warm sympathy for the model. This sympathy brings the portrait vividly to life and yet there is no statement made about the condition of this woman's existence. The choice of subject matter and its neutral treatment places Sophie squarely in the nineteenth century tradition referred to as the "juste milieu." 81

The "juste milieu" was a compromise between the Academy and the Impressionists and by the 1880's most artists and students in France adopted the standards of this half-way position. Technically, their art was characterized by a loose handling of oil - as opposed to the highly polished surfaces of the traditional Academic canvases. Also, a much lighter palette was favored by the artists of the eighties and nineties, the result of the direct painting and white grounds of the Impressionists.

Socially, the work of the "juste milieu" artists was characterized by the neutrality referred to above. Like most popular genre painters of her day, Sophie's paintings, in this idiom, portray poverty as "neat and respectful where everyone knows his place." 82 As Piper notes, "such was the way of life, and few painters probed more deeply." 83

This attitude is more clearly evident in *Interior of a Cabin, Westport* (Figure 14). Sophie's painting shows us the neat, well-scrubbed interior of a peasant's cabin. The peasant himself is seen praying, in the dimly lit bedroom, in respectful pose on his knees. Everything is in its place - right down to the man's boots carefully set by the doorway. Obviously
Sophie had not "probed more deeply" into the life and conditions of peasant existence.

Sophie painted a number of genre paintings during this same period which, like her pictures of family members and models, reveal the artist's convincing ability to create a sense of psychological realism. These genre paintings are of particular interest because they are autobiographical in nature. That is, the artist was drawing on the material of her own life for her paintings.

The painting **Susie** (Figure 15) falls into this category. This canvas portrays Sophie's younger sister seated in the library of their maternal grandparents' home. Susie sits reading in the morning sun. The library is suitably stacked with floor to ceiling shelves of books and the desk is piled with heavy, leather-covered tomes. The fat, stuffed furniture and heavy gilt-framed art on the walls combine with Susie's attire to present a candid glimpse of the taste and fashion of Edwardian England. Sophie has not idealized her subject matter and she presents a straightforward view of her sister engrossed in her reading.

It is important to note that the image of this young woman, deeply involved in her reading, has not been arranged for the delectation of the viewer. There are many analogous works depicting a young woman supposedly reading but whose mind is decidedly elsewhere. Sophie shows us her subject actually reading. There is no coy pose of vacuous stare into space; only a literate, motivated woman, immersed in her personal activity.
FIGURE 13. Italian Peasant Woman, 1903, Oil on Canvas, 87 x 66 cm., Victoria: Private Collection.
In this psychological reality, Sophie departs from the neutrality evinced by the genre painters of her day. However, technically her paintings remain very much in the compromise tradition. In *Susie*, for example, her Academic lessons are in evidence and yet they are combined with the more visually interesting painting techniques of the Impressionists. The figure of Susie, well established in the depth of the picture, shows again Sophie's sound grasp of draftsmanship. The use of half-tones, particularly in the desk, floor and walls, combined with an impressionistic use of bright, almost pure splashes of white on the central chair, window and Susie's bodice present a technically accomplished and visually interesting picture.

Another revealing genre painting is *Rejected* (Figure 16). There is no documentation proving this to be a self-portrait, however, the subject matter allows for this kind of speculation. In this painting a young woman is seated facing a canvas on an easel. Her slumped posture, with one arm hanging lifelessly, and the rejection slip lying where it had dropped on the floor measure the artist's disappointment with the judge's decision. 85

There is an added piquancy to this kind of genre or narrative painting because the personal content transcends the more usual empty themes of late nineteenth early twentieth century genre artists. Although Sophie was still using the technical devices common at the time there is some evidence in these personal, genre paintings that she was striving for a more individual artistic statement. This effort at thematic
individuality would later be reflected in an attempt to find a more personal **stylistic** statement, particularly in her landscape paintings.

By 1905, then, Sophie was enjoying a growing popularity as a professional artist. She must certainly have been pleased with the reception of the Fannin portrait in the capital city and her artistic output was slowly growing. She was developing artistically and seems to have been seeking a way of breaking through the restrictions of her academic training.

Sophie's pleasure with the development of her career was tempered with bad news from the Royal Canadian Academy. The minutes of the General Assembly of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts for May 13, 1905 describe the business of Election of Associate members. The minutes are explicit in pointing out why Sophie was refused admission:

"The next name up for Election was Miss Sophie Pemberton, she not having complied with the Constitution in showing on two previous occasions before nomination, the Secretary was instructed to write her explaining the cause of her name not coming up for Election as per Resolution:

Moved by E. Wyly Grier, seconded by Mr. F.M. Knowles and Resolved that the Secretary write to Miss Pemberton explaining that her nomination being made in error, the Clause of the Constitution requiring the number of previous Exhibitions not having been complied with it will be impossible to bring her name up for Election before next year."86

If Sophie was disappointed she made no mention of it.

She remained busy in her tower studio throughout the spring of 1905 and, by the summer months, had an active and persistent admirer. Canon Arthur Beanlands, of Christ Church Cathedral, was a handsome widower who came often to sit and watch her work in the Gonzales studio. The courtship was not long and
in September, 1905 they were married on a warm, sunny day.

An extensive article in the *Colonist* newspaper reflects the lavish attention the wealthy, propertied class paid to this gala social affair:

"Wedded 'neath smiling skies - The celebration of the nuptials - was a very notable event, charming in all its detail and witnessed by an assemblage representative of the elite of the city . . . The bride looked beautiful in a cream coloured liberty satin demi-train, perfectly plain, the bodice with deep Irish crochet lace collarette in cream coloured silk with chiffon. A corselette of mother-of-pearl squares and silver thread completed the costume. She wore a chaplet of orange blossoms in her hair. The bridal veil of Limerick lace, which had been worn by her great grandmother, fell over her in graceful folds from head to foot."87

Sophie was thirty-six years old in 1905 and possible fears of spinsterhood coupled with certain pressure from her mother may have had a telling influence on her decision to marry. As well, there may have been financial considerations. Sophie's father left explicit instructions in his will for the provision of funds to any daughters wishing to pursue a course "which in the opinion of (his) Trustee may be calculated to advance such daughter in art, literature or music or for the purpose of foreign travel."88 Although the instructions of the will seem clear there is a question as to whether Sophie received the full benefit of them. Money problems were a constant source of argument between Mrs. Pemberton and her daughter. 89

Besides the specific pressure of these problems, Sophie, as the daughter of a wealthy, upper-class family, was taught from the earliest age that the fullest expression of her life would be found in marriage. There can be no discounting or
belittling the very real love she felt for her new husband, however, the complexity of this issue must be seen in order to understand the gradual erosion of her firm commitment to her art. It is unfortunate that details about this personal matter remain obscure because it represents a most important turning point in Sophie's life; her marriage marked the beginning of a decline as a professional artist.

The Canon was a charming man and seemed genuinely interested in Sophie's artistic efforts. As the glow of early marriage began to wane, however, he conformed to the prevailing notion that it was not "proper" for his young wife to continue a dedicated career as an artist. As well, Sophie had accepted the time-consuming jobs of manager of a large household and mother to the Canon's four children. She grew particularly attached to his only son, Paul, then still an infant. Certainly the accumulation of these new responsibilities, coupled with her new husband's attitude, would serve to impede her dedication to creating art.

There were, however, some artistic accomplishments still in store for the new Mrs. Beanlands. In 1906 the Royal Canadian Academy, satisfied that all requirements had been met, honored her with an Associate Membership. The meeting of the Academy, attended by G.A. Reid, F.M. Bell-Smith, E. Dyonnet and other distinguished Academicians, held in May of 1906 confirmed Sophie's election:

"Ballots were cast for the Election of Mrs. Sophie Pemberton Beamlands (sic), Victoria, B.C., to the Associate Membership of the Academy. A.F. Dunlop and H. MacCarthry were appointed Scrutineers."
On the Ballots being counted the President declared Mrs. Pemberton Beamlands (sic) duly elected."

For two years Sophie worked hard as wife, mother, and artist. She exhibited a large canvas, called *Penumbra*, (Figure 17), with the Royal Canadian Academy in 1907 and began a series of British Columbia landscapes which were eventually exhibited in London. Her efforts at landscape painting were something of a departure from her work to this point and the Victoria newspapers commented on these latest paintings:

"'The Straits of the Gulf of Georgia' is the subject of a painting by Mrs. (Rev.) A. Beanlands. The picture has been acquired by an English gentleman and will be exhibited in various centres of the homeland.

Mount Baker in the distance, with a delicate play of pink upon its snow-clad summit, affords a fine contrast with the ultra-marine of the straits beneath. In the hither ground, a tree in blossom, excellently treated, is seen.

One of the first essays of Mrs. Beanlands in 'landscape', the picture augurs well for the new departure. There is a large treatment of the subject, with a nice appreciation of values that was only to be expected from the painter of the 'Chelsea Pensioner'.

The play of light and shade in the foreground of the picture is slightly reminiscent of Mrs. Beanlands' interior work. The painting will doubtless command attention in the old land, and will show that British Columbia is scarcely the wilderness of art which the articles by English visitors may have induced."

The *Colonist* reporter had much the same to say about this latest work of Sophie's:

"Mrs. Beanlands has achieved distinction by the products of her brush, but hitherto her work has chiefly been confined to portraiture or pictures in which figures were the principal features. Landscapes are almost a new field for her. She has just completed a fine painting, being a view of the Georgian archipelago, showing Mt. Baker in the distance. The point of view is on Mosquito Island which is at the entrance of Saanich Inlet. A bit of the island, with an old shack and a cherry tree
FIGURE 15.
Susie, n.d., Oil on Canvas
49.5 x 76 cm., Victoria: Private Collection
in full bloom from the foreground. At the left hand the easternmost point of Pier Island is shown. This will be a sufficient description of the locality, which is one of the beauty spots of this most beautiful part of the Dominion.

The painting is admirably executed. As shown in the window of No. 23 Broad Street, it is not seen to advantage, because the glass of the window and the shadow of the awning keep the light from falling upon it advantageously; yet even under these adverse circumstances every observer will recognize it at once as a masterly production. It is a characteristic British Columbia scene. The artist has caught the local color admirably. One does not need to be told, when looking at it, that the original is a British Columbia scene, for the artist has produced all the characteristic features of our spring landscapes. The coloring is good, the lights and shadows in fine contrast, and the mountain background exquisite. In every respect it is an excellent picture. It has been sold to a gentleman who will exhibit it in England, where it will serve to give some idea of the beauties of this region, as well as illustrate the high degree of excellence attained by one of our artists."

The combined workload of running her husband's household, caring for the children and her continued effort to maintain her status as a practising artist must have exacted their toll on her health. In the spring of 1908 she became very ill and had to undergo surgery:

"Mrs. Beanlands, the wife of Reverend Canon Beanlands, was removed on Saturday last to a private hospital where she underwent a rather serious operation on Monday. While her condition is extremely favourable, indicating as rapid a recovery as could in the circumstances be reasonably expected it is understood to be quite possible that something like a month will elapse before she will be in a position to return to her home at the rectory." 

Continued poor health and her various duties as wife and mother did not prevent Sophie from working on her Vancouver Island landscapes. By the summer of 1908 she assembled her latest efforts and, at a large social in her home, held a
preview for Victoria's socialites. The paintings drew appreciative comments from the receptive audience:

"Canon and Mrs. Beanlands were 'at home' at the rectory on Wednesday and Thursday afternoon, when Mrs. Beanlands' charming collection of pictures was on view. Mrs. Beanlands is leaving Victoria in a few days time for Quebec where she will spend the winter, and from there she will proceed in the spring to London, Eng., where she will hold an exhibition of her paintings. The collection of pictures which are going to England were on view in the drawing room, all being local subjects, with the exception of two most beautiful paintings, which have already been hung in the Royal Academy. It would indeed be difficult to say which picture attracted the most attention, but there can be no question that the one depicting 'Ross Bay' came in for universal distinction, while the one representing the Olympic range was greatly admired."94

During the spring of 1909 Sophie's exhibition of Vancouver Island landscapes was installed at the Doré Gallery in London, England. They were well received by the London audience, but, as can be seen from the variety of comment in the reviewers' articles the paintings were enjoyed for a number of different reasons. The World critic saw them as novelty:

"Further and further away our artists have to wander in search of novel themes for the exercise of their skill. It is interesting to note that among the exhibitions held at present in the West End Galleries are a series of sketches of Victoria and British Columbia by Mrs. Beanlands at the Dore Galleries."95

Someone writing for the Daily Express saw them as informative for those Londoners who had children in far off British Columbia:

"Mrs. Beanlands' exhibition at the Doré Gallery, of pictures painted in British Columbia will be of great interest to those whose sons have gone off to make homes for themselves and to gather fortunes in the new country.

The old, picturesque farmhouses, set among heather and pines, and gay with golden broom and many a familiar flower, are essentially English in type. They look away
across blue inlets of sea to paler blue snow-tipped mountains, some 11,000 feet high on the mainland of America.

Mrs. Beanland (sic), who is the wife of Canon Beanland (sic), is a native of Victoria, but she studied in Europe. She is an artist of great merit. "

The Times critic saw Sophie's paintings as a travelogue:

"At the Doré Gallery we are taken by Mrs. Beanlands (Miss Sophie Pemberton) to one of the loveliest regions of the earth, British Columbia. As art, the drawings are only moderately remarkable; but the artist has at least given faithful transcripts of the beautiful country on the coasts of Vancouver and Victoria, and of the marvelous strait that lies between. This is one of the few places in the world that combine snow mountains and blue sea, and Mrs. Beanlands has shown both in many of her drawings, such as 'Mount Baker from Bowker's Beach' and 'Macaulay Plains'. The luxuriance of the vegetation is displayed in such drawings as that called 'A Prosperous Settler' - a picture of the yellow broom which, though a newcomer, is covering whole tracts of country. It is well that English people should learn, from artists on the spot, what loveliness pervades some of the remote portions of the Empire; and Mrs. Beanlands has done her best to show it in the case of Victoria, British Columbia."

The writer for What's On ventured a rather more artistic analysis and suggested that Sophie had been "decidedly successful" in capturing the West Coast atmosphere:

"At present there are three different exhibitions being held in these galleries, in addition to the permanent one of Doré's great masterpieces, which is always on view. Of the temporary exhibitions the most important is the collection of sketches in oil of Victoria, British Columbia, by Mrs. Beanlands. Mrs. Beanlands has been decidedly successful in her result in attempting to interpret in oil the excessively brilliant atmosphere of the Pacific Coast. Mrs. Beanlands' work carried with it something more than the mere attempt to portray landscape and climate, for in No. 7, 'The Dwellers on the Threshold', there is a feeling of mystery difficult to explain. The same remark applies to many of her pictures as, for example, in No. 9, 'The Crown of the Hill', which stimulates one's curiosity to wonder what happens round the bend of the road. In this last-mentioned picture the wild yellow gorse standing out in the foreground against a soft distant landscape of grey is quite fascinating and cleverly rendered."
FIGURE 16. Rejected, n.d., Oil on Canvas, 101.6 x 107 cm., Victoria: Private Collection
In No. 30, 'Cadboro Bay', we have a fine study of rich autumnal colouring of much warmth and sunshine which contrasts excellently with the soft evening light depicted in No. 32, 'An Old Garden'. 'Finnerty's' also depicts an evening sky over a wide sweeping landscape, giving a great idea of breadth and expanse. In No. 5, 'The Lutheran Church', Mrs. Beanlands shows some knowledge of architectural drawing.98

The writer in the Indian Telegraph did not agree with the above and refers to the paintings' "English character":

"A colonial artist, Mrs. Beanland (sic), wife of Canon Beanland (sic), has an interesting exhibition of pictures painted in British Columbia on view at the Dore Gallery. Many of her pictures, which prove her to be an artist of no mean type, are essentially English in their character, and it is somewhat difficult to believe that their prototypes are to be found in the Far West."99

A similar opinion was expressed by the Morning Post:

"Mrs. Beanlands has very clever sketches made in Victoria, British Columbia, which in local colour and general conformation closely resemble the landscape of England, or rather Scotland. The same deep browns, russets, greens and yellows seem to be common to both countries. 'Shoal Bay', 'Olympian Mountains from Cook Street', and 'The Golf Links' might be glimpses of Caledonia, and the 'Sunset Glow in a Cornfield' and 'A Cornfield' might have been painted anywhere in Great Britain. Among the more striking works are 'Mount Baker from Bowker's Beach', 'Cadboro Bay', 'Macaulay Plains', which would have been better without the broken tree in the foreground, and 'The Dwellers on the Threshold'.100

The writer for Queen, alluding to a now lost catalogue which accompanied the exhibition, points out that Sophie's deliberate attempt to "interpret the excessively brilliant atmosphere of the Pacific Coast" was not successful:

"... at the Doré Gallery, where also another show, under very distinguished patronage, is being held of sketches of Victoria and British Columbia by Mrs. Beanslands (sic). The sketches are in oil, and the preface to the catalogue tells us that they are essays to interpret the excessively brilliant atmosphere of the Pacific Coast. Looking at the exhibition as a whole, atmospheric effect is not its strong point, but No. 20, 'Cook Street' is an exception, and 'Shoal's Bay' and
'A Portrait' show real feeling for the beautiful. The small water-colour drawing of a lovely bell-shaped white flower is charming, and shines out as a real bit of good work, the drawing of the delicate petals being tenderly given and the blue background well suggested.101

The Studio magazine writer disagreed and felt Sophie had a "genuine feeling as a landscape painter" and, with a short note on her work, ran a photograph of Macaulay Plains.

"From an exhibition at the Doreé Galleries, London, of some forty sketches of Victoria, British Columbia, by Mrs. Beanlands (née Sophie T. Pemberton), we reproduce one which fully evidences her genuine feeling as a landscape painter. . . But as a landscape artist she is entirely self-taught and has developed her own style as a student of nature upon the Pacific Coast, a region of brilliant sunshine and pellucid atmosphere. Mrs. Beanlands has been a frequent exhibitor in the past years with the Royal Academy and the Paris Salon."102

Finally, in Canada, a writer devoted exhaustive attention to the Doreé exhibition and, yet, provided a rather confused analysis of Sophie's efforts:

"The name of Mrs. Beanlands (Sophie T. Pemberton) is not well known in Eastern Canada, but lovers of art in British Columbia have long been familiar with her charming pictures - modestly styled 'sketches' in the catalogue of her little one-woman show at the Doreé Gallery - and their admiration will be endorsed by those London critics who are not afraid of the vivid contrasts of high-pitched colours which characterize the scenery of the 'demi-England' (to use Henley's phrase) of Vancouver Island. As the artist points out in a short forward, the atmosphere of the Pacific coast is very bright and pellucid, hardly interfering with an illimitable view, and the sunshine is more direct. Nearly all her pictures are studies 'en Plein air,' and she gives us none of those 'impressions' in the minor key of mystery which are so fashionable to-day in London with its low key and faint far-off sun and cloud-haunted thoroughfares. Whatever else she is - and she is something of an eclectic in style and methods of brush work - nobody could call her impressionist. The truth is that she has thought out a manner of her own which is strictly personal and not at all impaired by that imitation of some master's mannerisms, which is the insincerest form of flattery. One feels inclined to define her most characteristic achievements as colour-fantasias, delight in the golden-yellows and darkling purples and ultra-deep-marine hues
and vivid greens of Vancouver Island scenery overcoming her sense of tonality and feeling for decorative motives. Now and again on the Pacific Slope Nature may be said to fling her paint-pots in the face of man, and in two or three of her studies Mrs. Beanlands presents a mere catalogue of the result. But, as a rule, she gives cosmos rather than chaos, a phase of the artistic realism which may be described as reality, touched with some personal emotion. No. 36, 'Mosquito Island', for example has for its motive the contrast of the still-brooding wilderness, barbaric in form and colour, with the quiet, yet poignant, beauty of a cultivated orchard in blossom. In No. 7, 'The Dwellers on the Threshold', she shows us the few old pines that guard Beacon Hill, and subtly contrives to interpolate a note of sadness and solemnity, a sense of the silent passing of an ancient order of forest monarchs. In No. 10, 'The Olympian Mountains from Beacon Hill', we have a brief but adequate presentation of one of the finest views in the world. In No. 5, 'The Lutheran Church', the tombstone of an Englishman appears in the foreground, and that which Tuskin, the disestablished prophet, calls the beauty of memorial, is apparent. No. 17, 'Fairfield Road', is most adroitly composed. In No. 26, 'Time and Eternity', a grotesque dead oak on Mount Tolmie, contrasting with the deathless beauty of Mount Baker afar in the height of heaven, she has finely realised a fine idea.

If the non-essential detail in the foreground had been eliminated, she would have achieved something comparable with the Japanese masterpiece, in which Fujiyama, the eternal symbol of other-worldly beauty, silently rebukes the ephemeral. We have mentioned but a few of the striking pictures in an exhibition which should appeal even to the stay-at-home Londoner.

One thing seems clear, given the range and scope of her critics' comments, Sophie had, in some measure, broken with tradition and developed the beginnings of what might have become a purely personal interpretation of the West Coast landscape.

Although landscape painting was not greatly emphasized in the academic curriculum there was some training and encouragement given in the ateliers. Sophie may have learned from this training, however, there is every possibility that she taught herself the skills and techniques necessary to execute successful
FIGURE 17. Penumbra, 1907, Oil on Canvas 94 x 134.5 cm, Victoria: Private Collection.
landscape paintings. A contemporary writer for Studio magazine stated that Sophie was "a landscape artist entirely self-taught and (had) developed her own style as a student of nature upon the Pacific coast." 104

Sophie's earliest landscape efforts, a number of watercolors from the late 1890's, show a proficiency in that medium but little else. Canoists (Figure 18) is an example. This painting is rather standard fare for its time and represents the English landscape tradition transposed to the Canadian scene. Any number of Canadian artists of the period might have painted this scene with more or less the same results.

In 1903, eight years after the Canoists, Sophie painted a small oil panel called The Seine (Figure 19). This panel shows that Sophie was aware of the growing alternatives to her academic training. By the nineties and the first few years of the twentieth century an increasing number of art students were exploring the ramifications of the Impressionists. With their emphasis on a direct response to nature and the growing popularity of a more personal, expressive attitude towards the creation of art - as represented by Whistler and the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and 'Gravers - the way was opened to newer, more subjective approaches to landscape painting. 105

Sophie's sketch of the Seine shows some talent for this kind of painting. Through a loose, scumbled handling of her oil she has captured the effect of an overcast morning on the banks of France's famous river. The reflection of the trees on the water's surface is captured through the deft application
of dark tones over a light base. A few rapid streaks over the surface creates a sense of movement in the water.

This panel is the most "impressionistic" painting which Sophie made. Her Vancouver Island landscapes, which she exhibited at the Doré Gallery in 1909, were quite different. As has been seen, some contemporary critics recognised her efforts in this new direction. Although, an examination of these canvases today reveals little in the way of innovative landscape interpretation this is not to off-handedly dismiss them. They must be measured as early attempts in a career which did not come to full fruition. They retain, nonetheless, a freshness and charm ascribed them by their contemporary audience.

Macaulay Plains (Figure 20) was very popular in the Doré show and is an example of Sophie's attempt to "interpret the excessively brilliant atmosphere of the Pacific Coast." This canvas, the others in this exhibit were described in a now missing catalogue as "essays." It is unfortunate that there are no extant copies of the entire text of the exhibition catalogue to help us better understand Sophie's intentions.

In these paintings Sophie used pure, unmixed colors applied directly to her sized canvas. She did little glazing and achieved the "pelucid" atmospheric effects by the juxtaposing of her bright colors. See, for example, A Prosperous Settler (Figure 21). In this painting, now badly in need of cleaning, the brilliant yellow of the broom weed stands out sharply from the mixed palette of the ground cover. The crisp
blues and purples of the sea, sky and mountains recreate the impressive splendor of Mt. Baker as seen from Victoria.

Perhaps had Sophie continued with her landscape painting she might have developed a more personal artistic statement. Perhaps, like her contemporaries in Canada, she was beginning to understand that the Canadian landscape was vastly different from the neat English countryside. Daniel Fowler, just before her, and the Group of Seven, just after, demonstrate that interest and concern in the uniqueness of the Canadian landscape were in the artistic climate of the turn of the century.

Unfortunately Sophie got no further than this tentative beginning. How ironic, in retrospect, was this exhibition at the Doré Gallery. The enthusiastic reception of her landscapes must have been particularly rewarding considering the clear notion she had of what she was doing (as evidenced by the now missing catalogue) and the long series of obstacles she had surmounted in developing her talent and managing her career. Sadly, this exhibition was a kind of swan song for Sophie, because it was to be the last major professional effort she would undertake, although she lived for another fifty years.

Sophie and her husband settled at Wickhurst Manor, Sevenoaks Weald, in the Kentish countryside. Although domestic duties kept her busy, she continued her sketching and did some painting. Apparently Lady Sackville of Knole persuaded Sophie to paint a number of portraits of the Sackville family members and also some small oil sketches for the modest gallery which Lady Sackville operated. Besides these efforts for the
FIGURE 18. Canoists, 1895, Watercolor on Paper, 23.5 x 33.5 cm., Victoria: Private Collection
Sackvilles Sophie painted a canvas which was accepted by the Royal Academy for their 1910 Exhibition. The Bromley Times made a short reference to this painting:

"'Memories', No. 203, by Mrs. S.T. Beanlands, Aynscombe House, Orpington, is a very pleasantly toned study, and has poetic sentiment."

In the Lydenham Gazette there was a description of this now missing canvas:

"'Memories' seems quite a popular title for pictures again this year. Mrs. Sophia T. Beanlands, of Aynscombe House, Orpington, has adopted it for her oil study of a lady kneeling reflectively in the examination of some prints or plates, which appear to have been taken from an old chest. The rear of the figure is effectively lighted from a fire and the canvas is one displaying careful work."

It is tempting to conjecture that Sophie knew by 1910 that her life as a professional artist was over and it was now just a "memory". Although her professional career was effectively over, her creative urge continued to manifest itself in a variety of ways throughout the remainder of her long life.

She continued to paint small botanical watercolors. Sophie made it clear to her family and friends that she did not regard these wildflower paintings as "Art". Perhaps she feared being categorized as a Sunday painter or dilettante - given that women of her class were expected to be able to execute "neat watercolorings". A part of it, too, may have been her own nineteenth century prejudice about the relative degrees of importance with regard to media and subject matter. Watercolor flower paintings simply did not figure highly. Be this as it may, Sophie made many fine wildflower studies during her lifetime.
Ladyslipper (Figure 22) is typical of the botanical paintings which Sophie executed. This characteristic watercolor shows Sophie's talent for capturing the inner life of these beautiful flowers. These are not lifeless, academic studies. They are, rather, vibrant "portraits" of something which provided the artist with great pleasure. Sophie made dozens of these paintings on her frequent trips to Vancouver Island and all the popular species were done many times. Towards the end of her long lifetime her sketches of the lily, clearly her favorite flower, became increasingly ghost-like as she sketched them again and again in her sketchy hand.111

Besides continuing her sketching, Sophie's extravagant sense of design and color quickly transformed mundane living spaces into rich and fanciful interiors. For example, one room at Sevenoaks was painted to simulate a Persian garden in deep, rich colors of blue and red. Furniture was lacquered and covered with designs from Persian miniatures.112

Sophie's mother died in 1916, her husband, in 1917, Paul, whom she dearly loved, was killed in the last year of World War I. As if these tragedies were not enough, an unfortunate accident was to add to her woes. Sophie was thrown from her horse and carriage and the resulting head injury required a couple of years quiet convalescence during which she could do almost no physical activity. After so much misfortune Sophie may have despaired, however, there was happiness in store for her yet.

In 1920, the fifty-one year old Sophie fell madly in love with the dashing and debonair Horace Deane-Drummond.
FIGURE 19. The Seine, 1903, Oil on Board, 19 x 42 cm., Victoria: Private Collection.
He was older than she and had children nearly her age. They knew each other just weeks before their marriage at St. James', Piccadilly.

Horace was very much the country gentleman and had made his fortune from tea and rubber plantations in India and Ceylon. He was a "huntin', shootin', and fishin'" sort of man and if Canon Beanlands was an unlikely match for Sophie the differences with Horace were even more pronounced. One of his first gifts to his new bride was a complete wardrobe of staid, tweedy dresses and tailored white shirts. Sophie was to give up her beautiful, floaty tea gowns. With dismay she confided to her niece, Mrs. Harvey - "Oh dear, I can't wear these!"

But wear them she did.

The Deane-Drummonds travelled to India and Ceylon and then sailed on the Wolverine State's first direct voyage from Calcutta to San Francisco in May, 1921. They arrived in Victoria shortly afterwards to visit with Sophie's brother, F.B. Pemberton, and remained into the winter months. In an article written in the early 1950's, D. Ogilvy Irving, editor of B.C. Magazine, remembers that Sophie was still sketching when she could.

"I was to drive Mrs. Deane-Drummond to a spot near The Bend, on Oak Bay Avenue, where one had a magnificent and uninterrupted view of Mt. Baker.

We trundled up to The Bend in my ancient chariot, and in a minute the artist had everything arranged to suit herself. The driver became unnecessary and I was freezing.

The skies were blue with cold. Mt. Baker pierced the background with a solitariness which was emphasized by the sweeping foreground of icy waters.

'Yes, my dear,' she said in her gentle way, and smiled in her gracious manner, 'everything is just as I want it.' So, through chattering teeth, I promised to come back at an arranged time, and hastily made off.
When later I returned I found Mrs. Deane-Drummond serenely happy. Oblivious to the elements she had accomplished her work. We drove back to the friendly fireside and tea at Molton Coombe. 115

In this same article, Mr. Irving recalls that Sophie was most encouraging to her then little-known contemporary Emily Carr:

"Mrs. Deane-Drummond was one of the first to appreciate and speak in enthusiastic terms about the paintings of another Victoria artist, the late Emily Carr. That was before Miss Millie's work had attracted the eye of the wider world.

I was with Mrs. Deane-Drummond the afternoon she visited Miss Carr's studio, and remember being impressed by her praise and sincerity. Her opinion has been thoroughly verified..." 116

Indeed, Sophie did more than praise Miss Carr's work. She drew Mr. Mortimer-Lamb's attention to the struggling efforts of this artist and he, in turn, was instrumental in bringing her work to the attention of Eric Brown, then Director of the National Gallery. Mortimer-Lamb wrote Brown in October, 1921:

"When I was in Victoria recently, I went to see a collection of paintings by a Miss Carr, which Mrs. Deane-Drummond (née Pemberton) had informed me were quite admirable." 117

Their long visit to Victoria concluded, the Deane-Drummonds returned to England to live. On the family country estate at Boyce Court, Dymoch in Gloucestershire, Horace's senile father owned a huge crumbling and dilapidated manor. The old squire lived in two rooms of the mansion with a servant and had vowed to live to one hundred years. The hounds turned out for his centenary and he died shortly afterwards.

Sophie and Horace lived on in Gloucestershire during the twenties, taking frequent trips to fashionable resort areas,
perhaps in respite from the arduous task of repairing their estate. Again Sophie indulged in recreating her living space in a wonderfully extravagant way. One very large bathroom was painted to create a sense of being outdoors. The effect was that of a spring day with the sun rising. Walls were transformed with enormous delphiniums growing in a riot of painted color. To cover the floor, Sophie used some of her husband's tiger skins.

Also, during the twenties, Sophie repaired papier maché trays and painted them with colorful floral displays interspaced with butterflies and birds. She continued this work during the next couple of decades and during World War II many of them were sold to raise money for the Red Cross. There are a few serious paintings dating from this period and she exhibited on occasion with the Island Arts and Crafts Club of Victoria, B.C., and the Sevenoaks Arts and Crafts Society, England. However, it is clear that she no longer had the energy, or possibly, the desire to return to a professional career. She may well have been aware that her art, by this late date, was an anachronism in the roaring twenties. As it is, her painted trays, colorful interior design and occasional painting stand in mute testimony to what Sophie might have created had her life circumstances been different.

Sophie was to be a widow again. On Horace's death she moved to London and bought a house. Once again the bathroom was singled out for individual treatment. The walls and ceiling were papered with book dust covers. One could bask in the hot tub and recall favorite books or contemplate which
FIGURE 20. Macaulay Plains, n.d., Oil on Canvas
45.5 x 76 cm., Victoria: Private Collection.
to read next. Sophie lived here throughout the thirties and during World War II. When others fled the bombing of London Sophie stood her ground. The fire wardens, for whom she prepared hot tea in the middle of many cold, terrifying nights, were deeply grateful for her courage and consideration. Her own home suffered bomb damage and all around her was in ruins. Writing from her house at 4 Priory Walk, Sophie told friends in Victoria:

"Cresswell Mews has a garage and a small house destroyed. I went to Edith Grove where three houses were down and some people buried in the ruins . . . and the tragic news came that Holland House has been burnt down . . . It is 8:45 and the sirens have gone and bombs and guns again . . . Lady Robb's house is a complete wreck, though a lovely piece of Chinese china still stood on a sidetable."119

Sophie persevered throughout the war but in 1949 at eighty, she decided to return to Victoria to live out her remaining years close to her family and friends. Although Sophie was advanced in years, those who knew her remember that she maintained her gracious nature, keen mind and lively wit. An outing with her on the beach or in the park was a lesson in observing the beauty and color of generally overlooked details. Her artist's eye was sharp and in spite of her shaky hand she still sketched. A reporter spoke with Sophie shortly after her eighty-ninth birthday:

"Mrs. S.T. Deane-Drummond who celebrated her 89th birthday last week had an informal chat with the Leader.

This great artist, who was drawing spring flowers when I arrived, was resting after her birthday celebration the previous day, and was a little tired, but very gracious.

She recalled many incidents in her life to me, and smilingly said 'They are ancient history.'"120
Flowers, particularly the lily, had been Sophie's love throughout her long life. She continued sketching and drawing them and friends and relatives received little cards with a few lines of poetry and a flower sketch on special occasions.

On October 31, 1959, after six weeks of illness, Sophie Pemberton died peacefully. Her companion of the past twenty years, Miss Katherine Reardon, was holding her hand at the last moment and heard Sophie say, typically, "thank you so much."
III. **Conclusion**

With a solid academic training, outstanding student accomplishment, and sound social connections, Sophie Pemberton seemed guaranteed at least a modest career as a professional artist. She made a good start in that direction and her paintings demonstrate her finest achievements and the wide range of her artistic efforts.

Reasons for the brevity of her career have been given. We can only speculate as to the possibilities had her life story been different. Sophie had overcome so many of the barriers and obstacles placed in her way by the sexual prejudice towards women artists only to be ultimately defeated by the bounds and restrictions of marriage. Both her husbands were entrenched in their conventional, upper-class attitudes about the allowable activities of a wife. A practising professional artist was not one of them.

Even before her first marriage it had been an uphill battle. Given the untimely death of her father and the resulting responsibility of caring for her mother it is remarkable that she achieved as much as she did. It may well be, too, that marriage to the Canon was, in some measure, an escape from the exacting demands of her aging and ill mother.

Sophie's health was often a limiting factor. Sophie maintained a bright and positive frame of mind but by all accounts she was often in a delicate state of health and was desperately ill a number of times. She suffered a serious accident after her first husband's death and this may have
been the final blow which prevented her from continuing the more than auspicious start to her career.

Her achievements were substantial and yet Sophie never received popular attention and has, for the most part, been largely forgotten. A contemporary writer commented in 1907:

"That a prophet is not without honour save in his own country is well illustrated in the case of a Victoria artist, who has had five works accepted and hung by the Royal Academy and several by the Paris Salon, and yet whose fame only a small circle of friends seems to have heard. One would think that any city would be proud to claim an artist of such distinction, and so I believe would Victoria, if it only knew that in our midst is a collection of oils, the work of Mrs. Beanlands, well worthy of finding a permanent resting place in one of our public buildings."¹

Nearly ten years later another newspaper article says much the same thing:

"I must express surprise that the Victoria Press has not made more of the fact that Mrs. Beanlands is a Victoria woman, who has certainly brought 'kudos' to her native city by her really splendid artistic work."²

In 1954 a rather more astute critic notes the lack of attention towards Sophie's work and is able to identify some of the possible reasons:

"Since 1904 her work has been periodically in Victoria but lack of full recognition has evidently been due to a number of factors, among which has been our traditional disbelief in the viability of our native talent, her own modesty in display of her work and long periods of residence in Britain."³

The first and third reasons are easy to agree with, however, Sophie's excellent record of exhibiting her work in England, France and western Canada speaks for itself. Although she did not leave a large and visible body of work this does not diminish the significance of her achievement.
Sophie's artistic output and efforts are squarely within the "fin de siecle" academic tradition. Her work fares well when compared to that of many of her contemporaries' and there is no question but that her paintings served the same need which promoted the proliferation of late nineteenth century academic art. Sophie's own distinction between her flower paintings and the rest of her artistic output suggests that she was most serious about her efforts as a professional artist. Certainly the years of diligent study and the acclaim of the viewers of the day - as reflected in the newspaper reports - demonstrates a dedication to her profession that is one of the essential ingredients to being a good artist. The other is talent.

Sophie received a fair share of the prizes, certificates and favorable positions at the Salon and Academy Exhibitions which were awarded in recognition of talent. Finally, her winning of the Prix Julian for portraiture attests to a modest degree of official recognition of her talent. Although most of her paintings are conservative and fail to excite today's viewer we can acknowledge that Sophie had a degree of talent that went beyond the average.

Indeed, some of her work can impress today's viewer beyond sheer technical mastery. In particular those paintings in which she shares a glimpse of her personal life demonstrate an eloquent touch and she transcends the usual banal themes of late nineteenth century academic art.

It must be remembered that Sophie was a competent professional Canadian artist at a time when Canada had few such
talented people. Further, she was a woman artist with an international reputation at a time when the art world was a predominantly masculine one. Testimony to the soundness of her talent and abilities may be seen in the outstanding achievement of her winning the Prix Julian - the first woman ever to do so. These accomplishments alone should be more than ample to assure her a place in the collective contribution of all Canadian artists to the history of Canadian art.
Section I

1. For a detailed description of the Canadians studying in Paris during the period of 1867-1914 see the Art Gallery of Ontario's exhibition catalogue Canadians in Paris 1867-1914, Art Gallery of Ontario, 1979. See page 4 and also the helpful Appendix on page 48 which details the Canadian artists and the Salons in which they exhibited with their dates.

2. This "official" system was made up of a large number of ateliers which had been established by individual professors from the École des Beaux-Arts. These ateliers were usually integral units in one or more of the famed Académies. Of note were the Académie Julian, the Académie Bonnat and the Académie Colarrossi. For an exhaustive treatment of the European Academic art world see A. Boime, The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century, London, Phaidon Press, 1971.

3. Sophie married twice, however, she remains known by her maiden name under which she did most of her professional work. Her married names were Beanlands and Deane-Drummond.

4. Women artists like Sophie Anderson, who specialized in stock genre paintings, and Kate Greenaway, noted for her sentimental portraits of children, established considerable reputations in Victorian England. Rosa Bonheur, of course, was internationally famous for her naturalistic animal paintings. These and other women artists were highly successful in the traditional idiom of the day but it should be remembered that women artists like Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt were as successful in the growing avant-garde art world of the Impressionists.

5. The importance of access to life classes cannot be underestimated considering that the most serious academic paintings of the nineteenth century were grandiloquent historical themes in which the nude played a significant part. Portraits, still lifes, landscapes and genre were generally regarded as rather inferior subjects to paint.

6. Some Canadian artists who left accounts are Reid, Forster, and Harris, amongst others. See, for example, Forster's account of his time at Julian's in his book Under the Studio Light, Toronto, MacMillan and Co., 1928, p. 17. A description of the studies undertaken may be read in M.M. Miner, G.A. Reid - Canadian Artist, Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1946, p. 49. Finally numerous anecdotes about his student days in the Parisian ateliers may be found in
R. Harris, *Some Pages from An Artist's Life*, National Gallery Library, Ottawa, n.d.

7. See M. Bashkirtseff, *Journal of a Young Artist*, New York, 1889. Her diary is filled with her dreams of becoming a great artist and winning the Prix de Rome. In spite of the endless fantasies there are valuable references to the real life conditions found at the Académie Julian. For example, on page 141 Marie suggests that "in the studio all distinctions disappear. One has neither name or family."


12. The number of male students attending the ateliers was far greater than the female students. However, because this paper deals with one of those women students the feminine pronoun will be used throughout.


Section II

1. Except where otherwise noted all personal observations and information have come from interviews with Mrs. A. Harvey, one of Sophie's nieces. Mrs. Harvey lived with her aunt for many years and has an extensive collection of paintings, sketch books, and photographs which belonged to Sophie. I am deeply indebted to Mrs. Harvey for the wealth of information and details she so generously provided.

2. Pemberton Wood was the name of the family estate in Victoria, B.C. Joseph Despard Pemberton, Sophie's father, was the first Surveyor-General of Vancouver Island. He had been personally appointed to his post by Queen Victoria in 1853. J.D. Pemberton was an unusually strong-willed and talented man, even for his day and age, and amongst his achievements was a bronze medal for a design he submitted to the Great Exhibition of 1851 and a book he wrote, entitled *Facts and Figures Relating to Vancouver Island and British Columbia Showing What to Expect and How to Get There*, London, 1860.
He received substantial payment for laying out the streets of Victoria and his estate of 1,200 acres covered most of present day Oak Bay. Pemberton became a member of the first House of Assembly, along with six other representatives, on August 12, 1856.

3. Her certificate, signed by Mrs. Cridge, exists today in her "glory book" which is in a private collection in Victoria. This scrap book is filled with souvenirs, mementos, photographs, and press clippings which Sophie kept during her long life. A xerox copy may be seen in the files of the Art Gallery of Victoria.


5. When Mr. Pemberton built his huge house "Gonzales" he included a fine studio on the top floor - complete with skylights - for his daughters. The twenty room mansion was built in 1885 for $10,000. and remained until its destruction in 1952, one of the distinguished homes of Victoria.


7. Emily Carr did exactly the same thing with vastly different results.

8. In fact, Sophie's uncle helped on her behalf in persuading Mr. and Mrs. Pemberton that their talented daughter should be permitted to pursue her artistic inclination.


10. The choice of this school may well have been a compromise between Sophie and her parents. I have found references to the maternal side of Sophie's heritage - the Grautoffs - who may well have had a home near the Art School. See too, note 84.

11. In fact, Sophie owned this particular cast and it shows up in a number of photos depicting the interior of her Gonzales studio.


14. See xerox copies of her certificates in the Appendices.


17. A number of these sketchbooks are in private collections in Victoria.

18. The original painting remains unidentified.

19. Letter from Mr. Robert Lindsay, Secretary, Art Association of Montreal, to Sophie Pemberton, March 2, 1895.

20. Constant and Laurens were respected French academic artists and like many of the Establishment artists from this period they have since slipped into semi-obscurity. More recent research efforts and a renewed interest in the late nineteenth century academic art world will restore these individuals' rightful, if modest reputations.

21. For a complete list of Sophie's principal exhibitions see Appendix F.

22. Vancouver, *The Province*, June 5, 1897. This painting is now in the collection of the B.C. Provincial Archives.


30. Paris, *Gazette Des Beaux Arts*, March, 1899. Although the papers mention that Sophie won the prize for portraiture there are no references to the name of the painting. Sophie's medal is now in the collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.


32. Bibi was the infamous Parisian model André de Salis. He had a penchant for consuming vast quantities of brandy and claimed to be the close friend of the poet Verlaine.
See J.F. Macdonald, Paris of the Parisians, London, G. Richards Ltd., 1900 and Sophie's article "Models I Have Known: Bibi la Purée" in Westward Ho! Vancouver, the Westward Ho Publishing Co., July 1907. Transcripts of Sophie's article may be seen in Appendices D and E.

34. Paris, Figaro, April 6, 1900.
   Libre Parole, April 6, 1900.
   Radical, April 7, 1900.
35. London, Ladies Field, May 18, 1901.
36. This painting was later re-titled for French exhibition however, for consistency I have labeled Figure 8 with its original title.
37. Victoria, The Colonist, June 20, 1901.
38. Ibid., January 16, 1902.
39. Mrs. Flora Burns was Sophie's closest friend in Victoria. She maintained an active correspondence throughout the years with Mrs. Burns and these letters were made available to me by her daughter Mrs. Keir.
41. Ibid., March 25, 1902.
42. Ibid., Saturday, 1902.
43. Ibid., December 22, 1902.
44. Ibid., December 29, 1902.
45. Ibid., June 5, 1903.
46. Ibid., August 10, 1903.
47. Ibid., November 30, 1903.
48. Ibid., January 18, 1904.
49. Victoria, The Colonist, June 20, 1903.
50. Newcastle, Newcastle Weekly, June 14, 1903.
52. London, Lady's Pictorial, July 11, 1903.
The Victoria Agricultural Show was an annual affair and provisions were made to exhibit arts and crafts. This is further testimony to the lack of proper facilities in the capital city. Sophie may have enjoyed the opportunity to show her work to the Victoria Public but she did not record her opinion about exhibiting some of her canvases, which had graced the walls of Burlington House, in a setting surrounded by cows, farm machinery and prize winning vegetables.

James Blomfield had his studio in Vancouver at Number 39, Fairfield Building. He lived from 1872-1951 and is best known as a designer of stained glass around the turn of the century. For more information on this artist see R. Watt, Rainbows in Our Walls, Vancouver, 1979.
76. Ibid., May 24, 1905. This portrait is now in the collection of the British Columbia Provincial Museum.

77. Victoria, The Times, May 24, 1905.

78. As it turned out, Sophie executed very few commissioned portraits. The reasons are complex and not entirely clear. She may not have tried as hard as she might have for these jobs. Secondly, even in the provincial capitals, portrait artists were a vanishing type as more and more people turned to the portrait photographer and there were fewer commissions to be had.

79. I have found some references in her scrap book to commissions in Europe but there are no available examples in the collections of Sophie's paintings to which I had access.


83. Ibid., p. 309.

84. Identification of this painting and its setting came from Mrs. Harvey. The maternal grandparents were the Grautoffs who had extensive land holdings in Great Britain.

85. It may be that the fallen slip of paper came from the R.C.A. with notice of her failure to be accepted on technical grounds.

86. Minutes of the General Assembly of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts held in the gallery of the O.S.A. in Toronto on May 13, 1905.

87. Victoria, The Colonist, September 12, 1905. This article goes into extensive detail describing the rest of the bridal party and the reception which Mrs. Pemberton held at Gonzales. A list of gifts from the distinguished guests includes antiques from the Orient, Indian rugs, and Wedgewood china.

88. See the last will and testament of Joseph Despard Pemberton, Esq., July 22, 1892. It is entered in the Wills Record Book, Court Registry, Victoria, B.C. Vol. 3, Folder 125.

89. Mrs. Keir, daughter of Mrs. Burns, provided this information.
90. Minutes of the New Council held in the National Art Gallery, Ottawa, May 5, 1906.

91. Victoria, The Times, May 1, 1907.


93. Ibid., March 12, 1908.

94. Victoria, The Times, August 5, 1908.


105. We know that Sophie attended a few classes at the studio of Whistler in Paris. See Appendix D.


107. References to the now missing catalogue have been found in these journals and papers from which I have quoted.

108. The Sackville's were one of the great families of the British peerage. Mrs. Harvey has suggested that Lady Sackville was "naughty" and used Sophie's talents without paying.


110. Lydenham, Lydenham Gazette, April 30, 1910.

111. It should be noted, too, that in the late nineties Sophie assembled two large portfolios of wildflower paintings. These were beautifully bound books and she gave one of them as a gift to her younger brother and sister. It remains today in a family member's collection. The second
portfolio is now in the collection of the B.C. Archives. These portfolios are particularly interesting because Sophie included a few lines of poetry describing each wildflower painted. Her choices, from a wide variety of favorite poets, carefully lettered in her distinctive hand, reflect her life-long passion for both flowers and poetry.

112. Some of Sophie's lacquered furniture may be found in private collections in Victoria.

113. This description of Horace came from Mrs. Harvey.

114. Manila, Manila Daily Bulletin, May 7, 1921. This article is instructive in revealing the attitudes of Deane-Drummond and showing the kind of man he was:

"'In my opinion as one of the oldest planters in India, speaking the language of the people and having many of them among my acquaintances and friends, there is no imminence of an uprising in that country. But in the event that one occurred and the agitators gained control, I believe that within six months the masses would rise and overthrow them. The thousands of natives on my plantations are faithful and contented. This is typical of India, outside the cities.'

This statement was made by Horace Deane-Drummond, wealthy planter of Ceylon and Travancore, a large state in southern India, upon his arrival in Manila with Mrs. Drummond yesterday afternoon on the Wolverine State.

Mr. Drummond's plantations are devoted to tea and rubber. He was a pioneer planter in both these products. The market is dull now and Mr. Drummond did not care for a 'millionaire cocktail' because, as he explained, he is in 'tea and rubber.' He says there is an overproduction of rubber and for some time to come low prices must be expected.

He described the reported political unrest in India as froth and said that it is constantly stirred by educated young Indians in the cities, many of whom are briefless lawyers like a class described in the Bible, 'too proud to work and to beg they are ashamed.' Coming back from English universities, often with high degrees and scholarship honors, these young men seek government positions. Disappointed in most instances, they grow restless and discontented, descend into petitifossery and jingoism. Outside the cities, their voices are not heard.

Mr. Drummond discounts their efforts as he does those of radicals in the homeland: he has unshaken faith in the empire at home and abroad.
He went to Colombo in January, 1876, the week in which King Edward, then the Prince of Wales, laid the foundation stone for the breakwater at Colombo, which has made that port the Charing Cross of the east. In 1879 he became a planter by buying an interest in a coffee plantation. A fungus disease soon destroyed this industry and the planters turned their attention to tea. In 1882 the annual export of tea from Ceylon was only 14,000 pounds. It is now more than 150,000,000 pounds.

Rubber was introduced in 1900. Mr. Drummond was one of the first men to plant rubber in southern India. This was in 1904 and the recent data shows how agricultural enterprise has waited upon science and invention. For twelve years Mr. Drummond has made his home on his plantations in Travancore . . . Mr. Drummond is a prominent member of the turf club in southern India. His stables and horses were famous a few years ago and he in more than one season won the King's and State's cups. He is also devoted to shooting, as is his son. In an elephant hunt two weeks ago they got three tuskers . . ."


117. Letter from H. Mortimer-Lamb to Eric Brown, October 24, 1921, National Gallery.

118. This focus on bathrooms may be either an accident of memory on the part of those with whom I have spoken, or, because of the more personal nature of the bathroom, Sophie may have been able to allow her imagination free run.

119. Letter to Mrs. A. Beaven, her sister, n.d.

120. Victoria, The Oak Bay Leader, February 17, 1958.

Section III


2. London, At the Street Corner, November 4, 1916.

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APPENDIX D

Models I Have Known

I - Bibi La Purée, by Mrs. Beanlands

Whistler's atelier was the dernier cri among the Parisian art students, so much so that the concierge was stationed at the head of the stairs to call "Pas de place Mesdames, pas de place" to the stream chiefly of Americans who flocked there.

It was at his evening class that I first saw Bibi la Purée as model; a little old man, smiling and ecstatic, his bright eyes half hidden under a dingy and weather-beaten top hat; his clothes were green with age; his boots were the elastic-sided ones of the last century, and under his arm was a sheaf of old umbrellas, but while his clothes spoke of misery his whole bearing had an indescribable alertness and bonhomie. "A dandy even in his rags." I asked him to pose and next day he appeared at my studio and I decided to paint him for my salon. He was never punctual and his locuses were varied and original - there was an incendie in the street - he had to stop on the way to have a tooth pulled out - the waiter had forgotten to call him - a friend of his had had a crise de nerfs. But who is Bibi, one will ask? Vagabond by profession, an habitue of the celebrated Café Procope, the friend of Verlaine, the king of the 1899 carnival, whose real name was André de Salis, whose uncle was the Abbé de Salis of the Tichbourne case celebrity; everyone knew him; free drinks were given him; students saluted him; no one was happier than he. Bibi used to say proudly: "J'étais l'amis de Verlaine et Verlaine etait mon ami," and when that sad genius was dying in a garret it was Bibi who was everything to him, who sold his autographs or his poems and when all other things failed, sold himself to a college of surgeons for 40 francs to give Verlaine the necessary food and doctor's care.

But sometimes the Fates were unkind in our quarter. Bibi was not known and M. Julien, returning by the Boulevards, overheard an animated dialogue: "Je suis Bibi la Purée, je ne paye jamais." "Vous pouvez être Bibi le diable," said the infuriated waiter, but you must pay for your drink." This was Bibi who assured me he only drank milk and deplored Verlaine's failing for absinthe. Bibi also had an irresistible craving for other people's umbrellas. Mine disappeared. He told me one of the models had most probably taken it. "I will find her and say, 'Give me back the umbrella of Mademoiselle Mees.'" Everyday he reported on the chase; once he had vainly pursued her up the Boulevard Saint Michel until the subject dropped
and it was not till some months later that I heard of this strange passion of his, and that at the anniversary of Verlaine's death it was Bibi who wept the most bitterly at his grave. After the ceremony when the literary men were leaving the cemetery Bibi had disappeared and with him their fifteen umbrellas. But everyone forgave Bibi. As a model he was always amusing, always obliging. He used to say: "Tiens nous avons oublie quelque chose," and passed his fingers as a comb through his few grisly locks to make them stand out to his satisfaction. Once he climbed a high stool to open a window and fell, heels in air. Never was there such a catastrophe. I ran to him: "Are you hurt, Bibi?" "Not in the least," was the quick reply; "I often do this for exercise."

He was fond of flowers and always had a bunch of violets to present to us at Julien's evening class. "Et la moitre (sic) pour Mdme. Julian." he used to say. Once when posing at this class he left the model throne as he saw Mdme. Julian come in with her mother. "Go back," shouted Marie, the bonne who for twenty-seven years had been the dragon of the atelier. But, Bibi, paying no attention to Marie, presented the violets with the most courtly of bows. "Madame Julian will not be offended I trust if I offer these flowers to Madame, her mother."

When I was ill Bibi appeared at the hotel with flowers and a medallion of St. Genevieve, the patron saint of health, purposely blessed for my recovery.

I finished my portrait. It was hung on the line in the salon and was often surrounded by the students, who knew Bibi. I never saw him again. He died soon afterwards - alone and in misery. But his memory will long live in the Latin Quartier and let us hope that an angel has pressed down the scale for his gentle and unknown deeds.
In the peaceful old churchyard at Polperro lie many generations of the family of Minards. Nearly all have been fisherfolk and all have lived and died in their native village. John Minards is the last of his race, with the exception of a cousin in trade in London whom Minards carefully ignored, for the old fishermen with the blood of the Vikings in their veins rather despise the shopkeeping class, their life is a constant warring with that grand element the sea, and gives them a fine scorn for the life of cities. "He has the learning but I have the wit," John said. He used to "put people away" - that is to say, take visitors' luggage to the station on his handbarrow and it was in this capacity that I first met him. He had just seen an old gentleman off by the train. "What a brave old chap one must be to risk going up to London," he thought. He had often posed for "artisses" and was willing to come if I gave him the small sum he would otherwise make at his fishing. When he first married he was only earning two shillings and sixpence a week and then owing to bad times nothing for several weeks. "That was the way to learn a wife to keep house," he said, with a wink. The old Polperro houses are built of stone, grey gaunt and forbidding with their feet in the water like sentinels overlooking the bay, and always with a backdoor to the hills from which in times of danger the smugglers could escape.

Once in a bad gale the flood reached the lower rooms, and Minards had just carried his bedridden mother upstairs. A visitor, Mrs. D----, called in at the back door and said it was a grand sight. Minards thought he would learn her to call it a grand sight when other folks' property was being spoilt, so he opened the front door and in rushed the water. "Her fell a-screeching," and he had to help her out. He had been married three times, and had two daughters. Both died of consumption. It was a great grief to him and yet he was able to say: "After all it was only one trouble. If they had grown up or married there might have been many."

Minards came of a strong race. He took great pride in showing a cliff near Willy Wilcock's Hole, apparently fifty feet high, with sharp rocks below, and he impressively stated: "My uncle fell down here," "Poor man, was he killed?" "No, but he hurt himself a bit."

He had many stories about his mother. When she was born she said quite distinctly, "Da." The doctor and nurse testified to it, and her father was drowned that
night. When John was a lad, while the minister was preaching, he stopped to say, pointing to the end of the chapel where John was sitting with some others, "Will someone sit with those five lads? They are disturbing my preaching." "That's a lie," said John; "you have only stopped because you had nothing to say." Picking up his cap he left the chapel, knowing well what he had to do. He ran home to be the first to tell his mother. Presently his father returned. "Where is John?" Then came the boy, but he was not flogged.

"Polperro was not always an honest place," John once said; "about twenty years ago a dark blue shirt was stolen that was hanging out at night."

John was twice bewitched at school and had many strange tales of witchcraft. Witches who changed into rabbits and milked the cows and witches as squirrels who lived in the trees and could only be shot if the gun were loaded with quicksilver. A man whom he knew took his sister who had fits to Plymouth. A witch told them they would meet a woman who would say a certain thing to them and that she was the cause of the fits. They met her. The man knocked her down and drew blood and the girl was quite cured from that day.

Wedding cake, Minards told us, must be carried upstairs backwards and tied in the left stocking with the right garter and put under the pillow, getting into bed backwards and in strict silence.

He believed in white magic as well as black. A little boy - Jack - who was posing for me also, had his poor little hands covered with warts. John was fond of the ginger-haired little tacker, as he called him, and got a friend to charm them away. It was done without touching the boy. He only looked at them and said: "They are bad indeed, but they will now go," and the strange but true fact is that they daily grew smaller and after I had left Polperro John wrote to me that they had entirely disappeared.

Little Jack told me of the Mermaids who lived among the Cornish rocks, saying he had never seen one, but his father had - it was stuffed, in a museum. His father had been on a merchant ship and was a great traveller and Jack had many stories of his adventures. "Once a leopard came near my father, and my father was so frightened that his hair stood on end, and my father's hair kept rising till it lifted up my father's cap, which fell on the ground, but the leopard turned and disappeared in the woods and then didn't my father run for his life."
A German artist and his "lady" came to Polperro and Minards was excited and pleased to be asked to pose, or, as he called it, "setting for them."

However, they wanted a silent model and Minards' conversation was always gratis and plentiful, so next day a very downhearted and depressed fisherman came to report the German as a proper silly and that he had nothing in him but what the spoon put in. Later when I referred to his handsome wife. "Handsome," he said; "H'm! I think she and I were behind the door when Beauty was distributed," and he would not pose for them again, not for a Jew's eye. He was indeed a good friend and a good hater.

When the time came for me to be "put away" there were many good-byes. Giles, the tinker, an old crony of Minards, was there too, and I left with his couplet to Minards repeating itself in my mind:

"I've seen ye likeness on the flat:
Half an angel, half a cat."
APPENDIX F

PRINCIPAL EXHIBITIONS

1895
Art Association of Montreal
95  Sweet Seventeen
96  A Normandy Peasant

1896
91 Art Club
76  Old Garden Mesnieres, Brittany

1897
Royal Academy
59  Daffodils

Westham Exhibition
194  Brittany Interior

91 Art Club – Cliffords Art Gallery
51  A Brown Study
58  A Little Waif

Corporation Art Gallery – Brighton
50  A Native of Cork
179  Blue and Brown

1898
Royal Academy
780  Little Boy Blue

Westham Exhibition
163  A Little Waif
164  The Old Smock-frock

Birmingham Society of Artists
295  Winding Yarns
601  Afternoon Tea

Manchester Art Gallery
430  A Little Waif

Walker Art Gallery – Liverpool
392  Little Boy Blue
91 Art Club

15 A Pastoral
44 Winding Yarns
128 Pear Blossom

1899 Paris Salon

1038 Bibi la Purée

Manchester Art Gallery

483 Winding Yarns

1900 Paris Salon

Royal Academy

47 Interested (Un Livre Ouvert)

1901 Waitt's Hall (Victoria, B.C.)

John-o-Dreams
The Twilight of the Lilies
Daffodils
Little Boy Blue
Blue and Brown

1902 Royal Academy

445 John-o-Dreams

Paris Salon

1383 Un Livre Ouvert

Manchester City Art Gallery

101 Un Livre Ouvert

1903 Royal Academy

Paris Salon

1383 Un Livre Ouvert

Royal Academy

549 Verlaine's Friend (Bibi la Purée)

St. Louis Exhibition

Un Livre Ouvert
Victoria, B.C., Agricultural Show

Sir Henri de Lotbinière
Spring
Autumn
John-o-Dreams
Country Lass
A Rural Philosopher
Spanish Beggar
A Roman Centadina
Chelsea Pensioner
Sligo Cabin
Seine, Early Morning
Woods at Mayfield
Norman Courtyard
Chrysanthemums

Blomfield's Studio, Vancouver

The Agricultural Show Exhibition

1907
Royal Canadian Academy
13 Penumbra

1909
The Doré Gallery, London

Shoal Bay
Olympian Mountains from Cook Street
The Golf Links
A Cornfield
Sunset Glow in a Cornfield
Mount Baker from Bowker's Beach
Cadboro Bay
Macaulay Plains, B.C.
The Dwellers on the Threshold
A Prosperous Settler
Ross Bay
A Crown of the Hill
The Old Garden
Time and Eternity
Finnertys
The Lutheran Church
Cook St.
A Portrait
Mosquito Island
Fairfield Road

1910
Royal Academy
203 Memories

1947
Little Centre Gallery, Victoria, B.C.

Retrospective
1949  Greater Victoria Arts Centre  
       22 Oil painting retrospective  
1954  Vancouver Art Gallery  
       40 Oil painting retrospective  
          with a small brochure  
1959  Art Gallery of Greater Victoria Memorial Exhibition  
1967  Art Gallery of Greater Victoria  
       10 Oils and 1 charcoal work  
          with a small brochure  
1978  Art Gallery of Greater Victoria  
       Major retrospective  
1978  University of British Columbia  
       Major retrospective