

# *The* STUDIO

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• NEW ZEALAND ISSUE •

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## CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

### ARTICLES

#### THE ART OF NEW ZEALAND :

Foreword by the Rt. Hon. Peter Fraser, C.H., P.C., M.P.,  
Prime Minister of New Zealand page 101

Contemporary Art in New Zealand by Roland Hipkins page 102

New Zealand War Artists page 121

Maori Art by W. J. Philipps page 123

Architecture in New Zealand by Cedric Firth page 126

Book Production in New Zealand page 130

New Books page 132

### COLOUR PLATES

WAIMANGU by Alice F. Whyte page 102

STILL LIFE by T. A. McCormack page 103

ODE TO AUTUMN by A. Lois White page 106

PORTRAIT OF ARTIST'S WIFE by M. T. Woollaston page 107

ABSTRACT—SOFT STONE WITH WORN SHELL AND WOOD  
by Eric Lee Johnson page 117

FIGURE COMPOSITION by John Weeks page 120

PATROL, VELLA LAVELLA, 1 OCTOBER, 1943, by J. Bowkett Coe page 121

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## NEXT ISSUE

PORTRAITS OF OUR KINGS  
AND QUEENS—  
FROM HENRY VIII TO  
QUEEN VICTORIA  
by Ellis Waterhouse

### RECENT IMPORTANT ARTICLES

PAUL NASH 1889-1946  
by Richard Seddon  
(March)

THE HERITAGE OF ART IN INDIA  
by John Irwin  
I, II AND III  
(December, January and February)

JAMES BATEMAN  
by F. G. Mories  
(November)

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
ART GALLERY  
by Trenchard Cox  
(October)

SMALL SCULPTURE IN THE HOME  
by Kenneth Romney Towndrow  
(September)

NORWICH CASTLE MUSEUM  
AND ART GALLERY  
by G. V. Barnard  
(August)

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# THE ART OF NEW ZEALAND

FOREWORD by the RT. HON. PETER FRASER, C.H., P.C., M.P.,

*Prime Minister of New Zealand*

HE who said "Where there is no vision the people perish" spoke wisely, for the life of man must not be wholly material. We have all, I think, learned in the last decade the great importance of social and political vision, and we have seen how much we owe to the vision of those men we think of as great. Now, in this important time of post-war settlement, we are trying to rebuild our civilization on the basis of United Nations, and that is a vision we must all most earnestly strive to make a reality.

There is also the vision and inspiration of the artist, and that is essential to every community. The work of the artist enriches our everyday lives and should inspire us to stand by the ideals of freedom and justice without which our civilization will collapse and crumble away.

We in New Zealand have endeavoured to follow a tradition in the political and social sphere which we may claim to be based on a vision of liberty and equality. And now, although New Zealand is a small country, we are beginning to learn the value of the artist's vision. For I doubt whether in the history of this country there has ever been such an intense and lively interest taken in matters of art as in the last few years. Our lives are becoming increasingly enriched by New Zealand artists working here in our own land.

I thank *The Studio* wholeheartedly for its interest in New Zealand art, and I recommend these articles and pictures to our fellow citizens in the British Commonwealth who feel, as I do, that art, in the profoundest sense, is common wealth.



Prime Minister

*The Editor desires to express his gratitude to the Right Hon. Peter Fraser, C.H., P.C., M.P., for his Foreword; to Mr. J. W. Heenan, Under Secretary, and Dr. J. C. Beaglehole, of the Department of Internal Affairs, who were responsible for collecting the material; to Mrs. McIntosh for her preliminary liaison work in connection with the issue; to Mr. S. M. Williams, the artist, whose original design could not, for technical reasons, be used for the cover, but whose ideas have been embodied in it; and to all authors and artists who have contributed to this number.*



ALICE F. WHYTE.  
*Waimangu.* (Courtesy  
of Harry H. Tombs  
Ltd., Wellington)



RATA LOVELL-SMITH.  
*Gate on the Crest of the  
Scree*

# CONTEMPORARY ART IN NEW ZEALAND

*By Roland Hipkins*

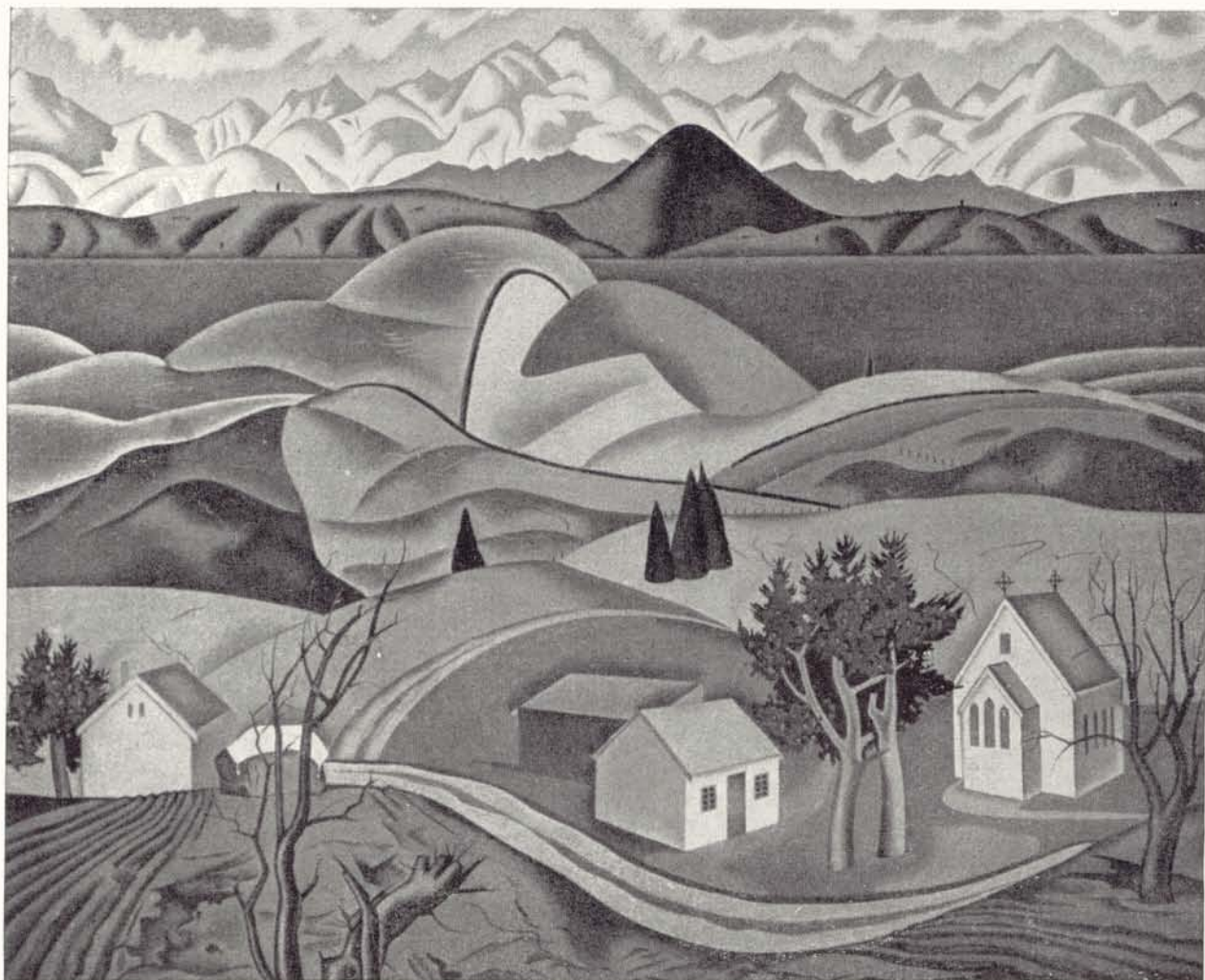
DURING the greater part of New Zealand's hundred years of British settlement, sentiments for the "Homeland" so affected the heart and mind, and indeed the physical vision, that painters interpreted the new and strange in the antipodean environment in terms of the old and familiar features of the European scene. Few of our early artists realized the unique possibilities of this new land. Since the 1914-18 war, however, there has been considerable æsthetic development and a greater awareness of the rich visual stimuli of a country felt as native. To-day, New Zealanders are more conscious than they have been of cultural values. They are displaying a more critical attitude, and are aware of contemporary trends in art and art education, though progress has been much slower,

certainly, than in the social and economic spheres. The interest and appreciation of the mass are, however, still so strongly conservative that aspects of art now considered "modern" in New Zealand would be regarded as conventional even in the sister Dominions. This is due to some extent to the scattered, non-metropolitan nature of a population of a million and a half; but even in the four main cities, Auckland and Wellington in the North Island and Christchurch and Dunedin in the South Island, both achievement and critical judgment vary so considerably that what is acceptable in one place often fails to find equal acceptance in another.

Before commenting on the work of painters who have captured something of the contemporary spirit, and whose

T. A. MCCORMACK. *Still Life*. Water-colour. (Collection of the Hon. F. E. Cumming-Bruce)





RITA COOK. *Central Otago*

work may be little known or appreciated outside their own district, mention may be made of the established artists who receive general recognition.

The most notable of these is Sydney L. Thompson, whose life has been entirely devoted to painting. He spent several years studying in London and Paris, and settled in Brittany, painting mostly around Concarneau. Impressionism claimed him and dominated his approach to nature. After submitting himself to the scientific discipline of the French luminists, he gradually developed a personal style, spontaneously painting in broad masses. Essentially a colourist, he juxtaposes subtle and varying hues to produce exhilarating effects of light and colour. In approaching nature he seems always to catch it on the wing. He is mainly concerned with the purely visual aspects of nature and there is little evidence of the impact of post-impressionism. His New Zealand landscapes embody the technique, colour and outlook developed through long associations abroad.

A. F. Nicoll, a more traditional painter, has always had his roots firmly set in New Zealand. There is a feeling of substantial fact about all his work. The pleasant colour and skilful control of tonal values in his landscapes indicate a more æsthetic approach than is evident in the frank realism of his portraits.

The landscapes and figure subjects of H. Linley Richardson also depend on tonal qualities but with greater force of draughtsmanship and colour. He was an accomplished artist in Britain, and a member of the Royal Society of British Artists, before settling in New Zealand nearly forty years ago. His most interesting contributions are his portrait drawings and paintings of Maoris. He lived, at times, among these people and acknowledges their gracious friendliness in our own day. But he was more interested in studying native types to re-create, in his paintings, the drama of the past. His arresting portraits proclaim the spirit of the war-proud warriors of earlier days, complete

H. V. MILLER.  
*A Country Road*



CHARLES TOLE.  
*Farm House, Tamaki*





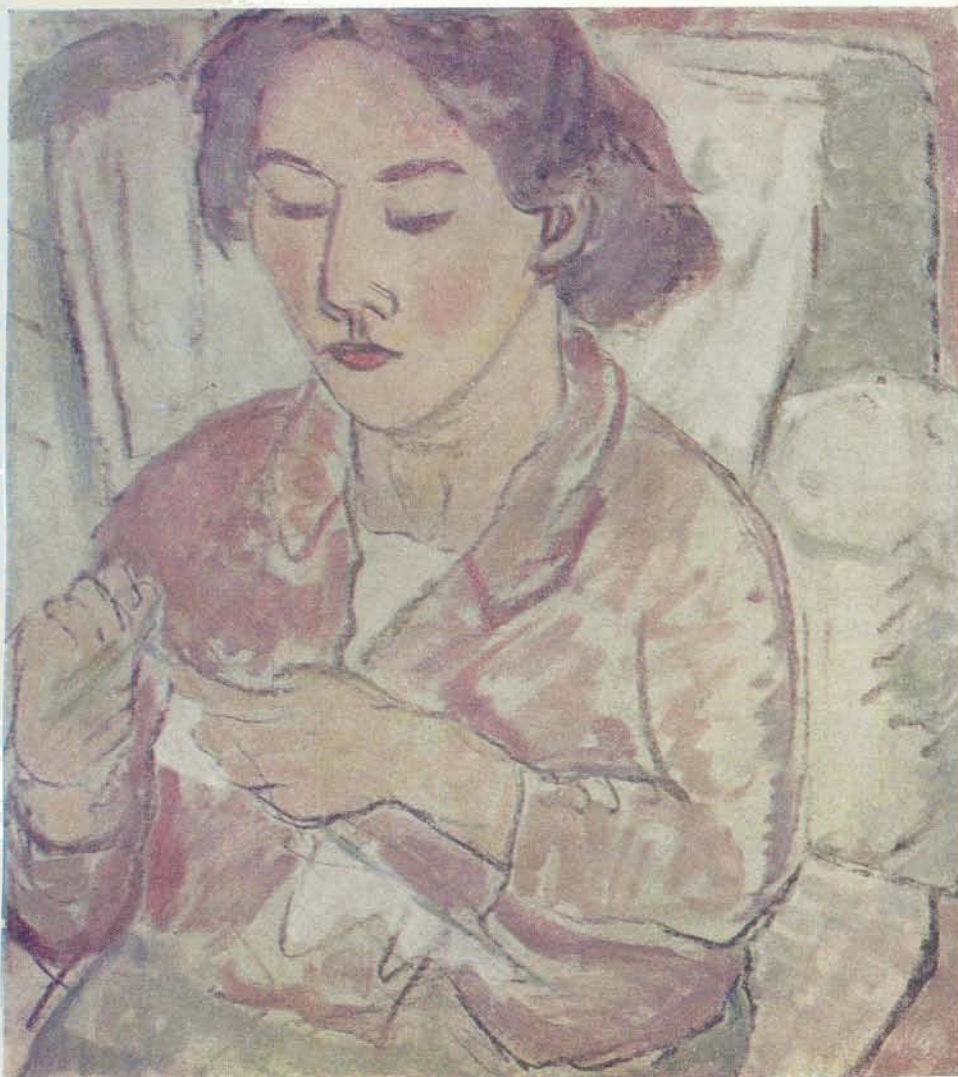
A. LOIS WHITE. *Ode to Autumn*.  
(Courtesy of Harry H. Tombs Ltd.,  
Wellington)

with facial tattoo, ornaments and weapons, and even his portraits of Maori women reveal the forceful qualities of these Polynesian people.

No greater contrast to Richardson's dramatized conceptions could be found than Elizabeth Kelly's portraits of young women. These graceful tributes compare well with the academic refinements of London, and of the Paris Salon, by which Mrs. Kelly was awarded a silver medal. In portraits of men she puts a stronger accent on formal relationships, while still retaining interest in colour. In landscape painting she and her husband, Cecil Kelly, have shared the enthusiasm of other competent painters, like

Rata and Colin Lovell-Smith, Esther Hope and Grace Butler, for the fine scenic hinterland of hills, lakes, rivers, and the majestic grandeur of the snow-clad mountains of the South Island. These and many other painters, such as the Wellington artists Nugent Welch, Cedric Savage and Marcus King, have brought attention to the richness and variety of New Zealand landscape, each painting in his own characteristic manner visual representations of its natural beauties that have given satisfaction to a wide and appreciative public.

The work of the artists now to be mentioned is less wide in its appeal, and is appreciated most by those who balance



M. T. WOOLLASTON. *Portrait of Artist's Wife*. (Courtesy of Harry H. Tombs Ltd., Wellington)

their emotions with aesthetic discernment. This applies particularly to the paintings of T. A. McCormack and John Weeks, both of whom possess sensitivity, originality and independence of thought.

As a water-colourist, T. A. McCormack is pre-eminent. He was born in New Zealand and has developed his art entirely within his own country. With no formal art training, he began his first untutored efforts in water-colour painting at the age of twenty. Some of these early flower studies have recently come to light. They reveal an instinctive colour sense and a penetrating observation, but they hardly anticipate the extreme freedom and sophistication of his later development, remarkable for its variety and swift calligraphic brushwork. But the essence of his art

lies not merely in technical inventiveness nor even in subject matter—though generally it is strongly representational. Both technique and matter provide a spring-board for creation. They reveal his perception and feeling of the spirit, rather than the truth of objective phenomena. His attitude to nature is contemplative and his output is small, for he rarely paints without much thought and meditation. In still-life painting, more than in landscape, he places the accent on design and creative colour. McCormack is in sense and feeling poetic. An exhibition of his work was held in New York in 1945.

In contrast to McCormack, John Weeks owes a great deal to Europe. He travelled and studied in Britain, Paris and Italy and also had memorable painting experiences in

Corsica, Morocco and the Atlas mountains. He returned to New Zealand with a clearly conceived philosophy. He joined intellect with deep feeling and an unusual power of self-criticism. Working mainly in oils, his paintings are the outcome of a series of studies and experiments. Each subject is consciously organized to achieve a new synthesis of form, composition and colour and in this he is sufficiently unorthodox to appeal only to the educated eye. His figure subjects and still lifes are astutely designed, and always possess a strong decorative quality combined with rich tonal painting and subtlety of colour. His landscapes, two of which were recently commissioned for presentation to the Carnegie Trust in America, also possess some of these characteristics, but in a lesser degree. The quality of his art springs from his own profound interest in the purely æsthetic possibilities of painting. In range and completeness Weeks is symphonic; McCormack is chamber music.

Among younger men, Russell Clark saw the world beyond New Zealand for the first time as an official war artist in the Pacific. He has brilliant gifts; he is a virtuoso of styles and techniques. He is an accomplished illustrator and designer, landscape and figure painter, and has executed



ELISE MOURANT. *Cascade Street, Auckland.* (Conté and Wash)

Below: JULIET PETER. *Geraldine Township.* (Water-colour)



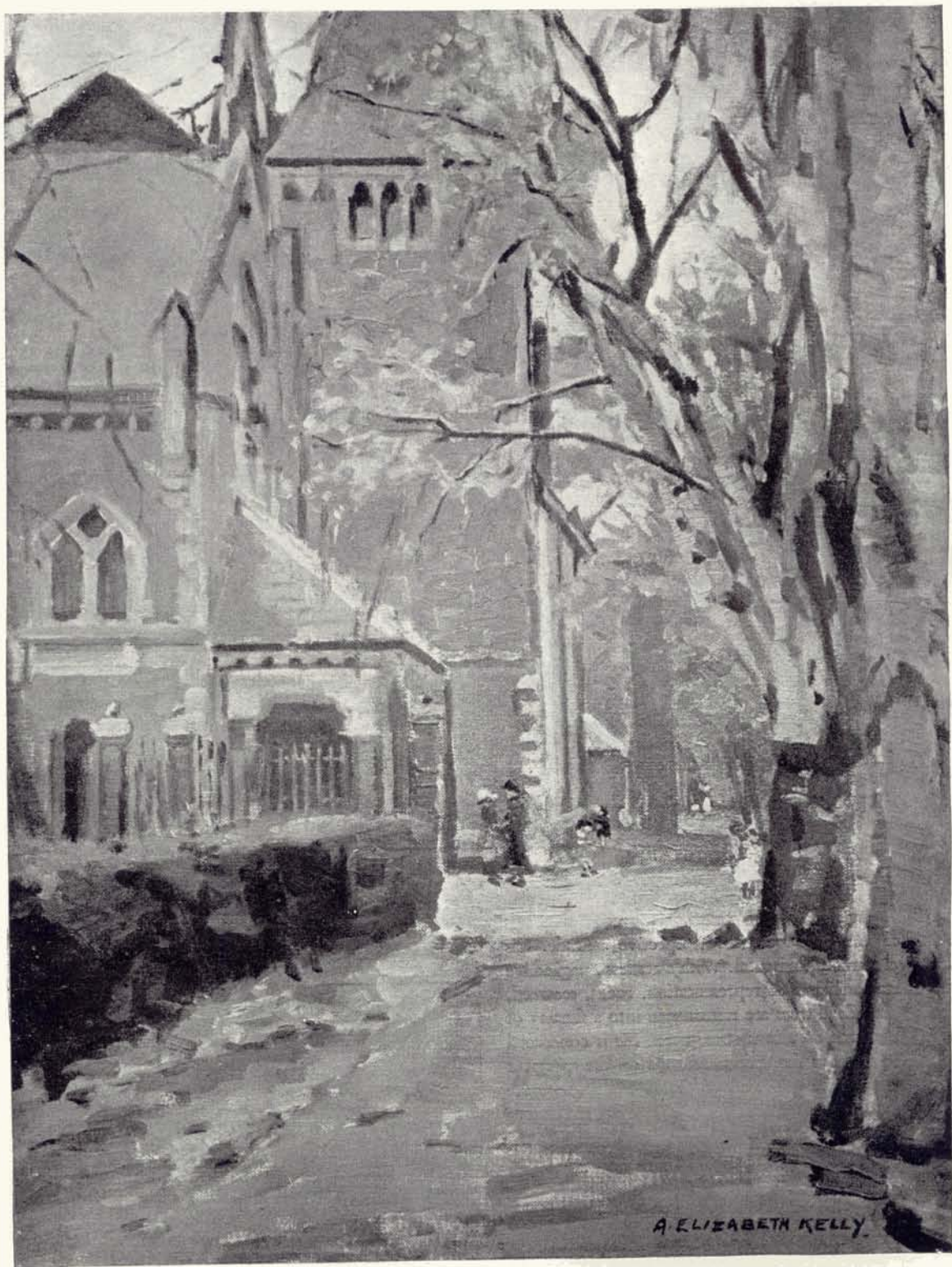


some interesting murals. By contrast the recent paintings of Eric Lee Johnson show an introspective attitude. His mind delves into the elemental. With a restless imaginative research into problems of representation, rocks, seaweed, driftwood and dead trees are transmuted into a fantasy of forms that assume a curious strangeness. He is concerned with the anatomy of the unseen, and invites the spectator to share his own subjective adventures. His paintings are creative in colour and design and range from realism to abstraction and surrealism.

The impact of modernism, however, is only just being felt in New Zealand. Several young painters are seriously experimenting. Gordon Walters has made some searching semi-abstract paintings of hills, trees and landscapes, that evoke a feeling of things characteristically New Zealand. M. T. Woollaston's modernism is almost entirely intuitive. His paintings, with their illusive charm of colour, are

JENNY CAMPBELL. *Southerly Swell*  
JOHN TOLE. *Sugar Works, Chelsea, Auckland*





ELIZABETH KELLY. *Autumn, Christchurch*



EVELYN PAGE. *Christchurch Railway Station*

aesthetically sometimes very compelling. Colin McCahon's portrait heads are also compelling, but by force of a stark and forbidding primitive vision. Austin A. Deans and J. Bowkett Coe have both, since their return from vivid war experiences, rejected much of their formal art training and are exploring new methods of expression. Dorothy Manning's oils are sensitive in colour and vigorous in treatment. H. V. Miller, since the untimely death of Kathleen Salmon, is the best landscape painter in the southern province of Otago. His work is thoughtful and restrained and he has a good decorative sense combined with a fine appreciation of line. These qualities apply equally to the work of the brothers John and Charles Tole of Auckland, whose small oils have a definitely marked formal style and distinction.

A country that gave the first franchise to women might expect in the arts some flowering of this social emancipation; and indeed to-day some of our most interesting painters are women. A few have found greater fulfilment

overseas. The virile water-colourist, Maud Sherwood, is now settled in Australia, and Frances Hodgkins, a rare colourist, held an honoured place in the vanguard of modern painting in Britain. Though the mature development of such artists could hardly have taken place in New Zealand the cultural soil of this country is fast becoming more fertile for indigenous growth. Rita Cook has evolved a personal conception of the landscape of the South Island. Her vision carries her beyond the externals to the basic forms of the earth, and she can portray the emotional and social significance of man-made structures upon its surface. Her paintings are clear cut in design and consciously rhythmic. The sparkling light, so characteristic of New Zealand, is intensified, not by atmospheric realism but by the use of sharp, linear emphasis and by simplified colour and tonal gradations within the mass.

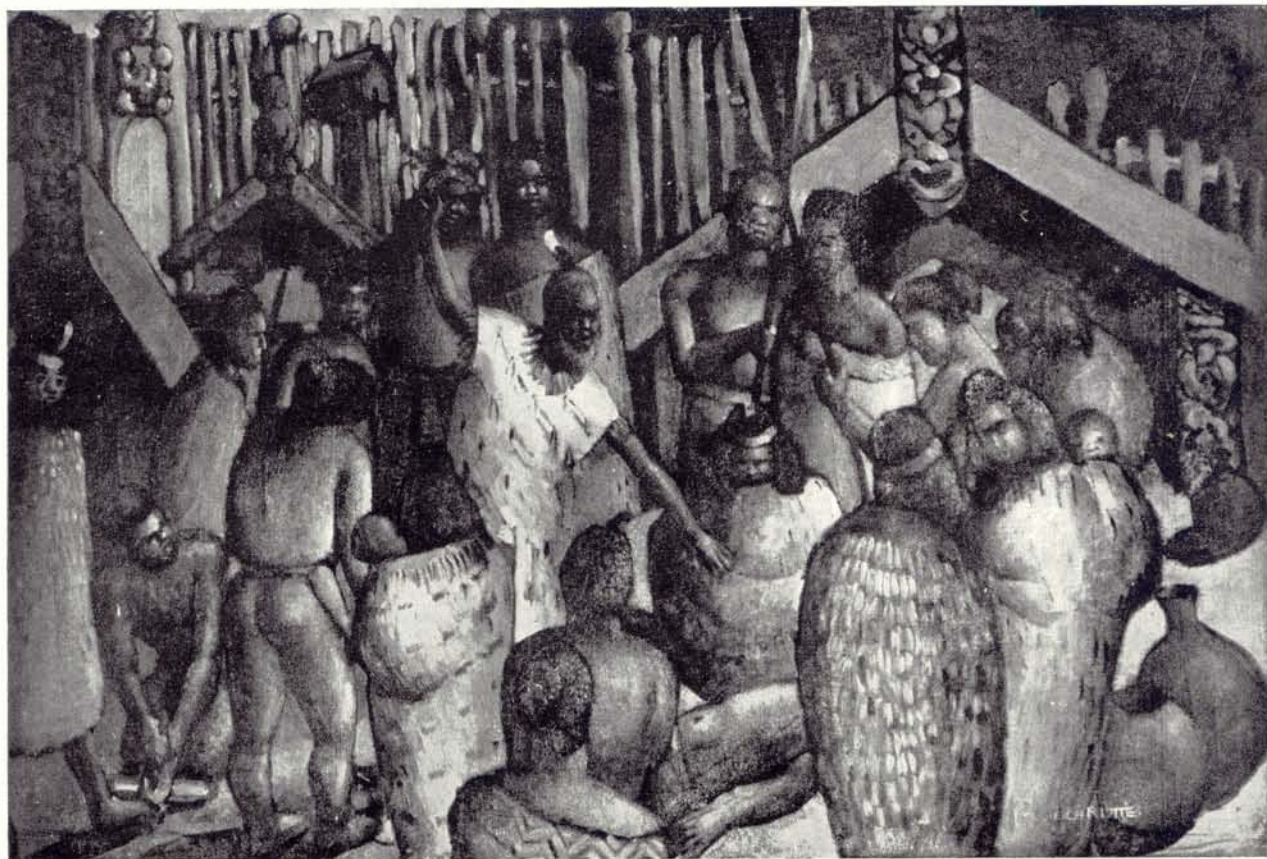
Similar treatment, but with decorative intent, is found in Louis Henderson's paintings. Juliet Peter has a more descriptive outlook. Her *Geraldine Township* is a compact

aggregation of unpretentious wooden buildings of little architectural merit, but typical of hundreds of small rural communities throughout New Zealand. A generation ago painters would have infused elements of the picturesque to glamorize these utilitarian creations of local builders. Artists are now seeking and honestly painting subjects that reflect the truth of New Zealand life and landscape as it is. Jenny Campbell has realized the distinctive character of her adopted country in paintings of forests, mountains and swirling river rapids that display a fine sense of colour. This is also apparent in the portraits and lively street scenes of Evelyn Page. Another woman artist, veiling her identity under the professional name of "Barc", has produced some vigorous pen and wash figure subjects that disclose psychological insight into human relationships in this post-war period. Of the northern artists, Alice F. Whyte's oils reveal true sensitiveness in the use of colour and in control of design and textural qualities of paint; Ida G. Eise, in her landscapes of Auckland's rural countryside, and in her still-lives, is more seriously concerned with problems of plasticity and volume; and Elise Mourant's excellent water-colours of old wooden buildings and streets are very typical of the New Zealand urban scene.

A. Lois White is one of the very few artists in New Zealand who had exclusively used the human figure as a basis for her painting. In this she shows mastery of three-dimensional form, volume and strongly gradated tonal values. Her figure subjects are organized into a weaving interplay of forms that have considerable rhythmical vitality. This lyrical expressiveness has recently been modified by a more serious and meditative attitude in her paintings of social and political themes, which, however, would assume greater importance on a larger scale as murals.

There has been little interpretation of many characteristic aspects of industrial, agricultural, social and national life, that might find appropriate expression in murals. In this field, James Turkington has courageously explored the technical possibilities of various media, and has devoted himself, for the past twelve years, to direct wall painting and interior decoration, producing some accomplished murals in schools and public buildings. But the group of murals commissioned by the Government, and painted by F. H. Coventry, a New Zealander now working in Britain, is the most satisfying achievement of its kind. Each of the four large panels represents a stage in the country's historical

BESSIE CHRISTIE. *Old-Time Maori Gathering*



SYDNEY L. THOMPSON.  
*The Artist's Wife.*  
 Below: HELEN BROWN.  
*Grey Afternoon.*  
 (Water-colour)



development. Originally designed for, and placed in, the Government Court at the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition, held in 1940, they still await a permanent home in a public building.

In the graphic arts quite remarkable progress has been made. In wood engraving, E. Mervyn Taylor, who has a strong sense of design and a discriminating understanding of his medium, might appropriately be called the Bewick of the Dominion. He has a genuine feeling for real New Zealand things, its birds, insects, flowers, trees and Maori mythology, which is now being shared by a wider circle of admirers through the publication, in an excellent little volume, of a selection of his wood engravings. George Woods is a draughtsman with an acute analytical mind.



This is apparent in his book illustrations, in his stylized aquatint portraits of Polynesian types, and in colour block prints that owe little to tradition in spirit or technique. Leo Bensemann reveals a more fanciful turn of mind in his frankly decorative wood engravings and pen drawings, but he is also capable of blending decorativeness with factual realism, as is an occasional portrait. S. B. MacLennan, after a London training, has returned to produce some fine wood engravings and to use his discerning draughtsmanship in water-colours of New Zealand subjects. A. H. McIntock, in etching, has mastered the finer qualities of this craft.

The work of the young artists of the northern province, Auckland, is worthy of comment. In no other part of New Zealand is there such evidence of a distinctive school of painters. The mildly revolutionary artists of the south



VIDA STEINERT. *Artichokes*

Top Left: MADGE CLAYTON. *Joan*

Left: DOROTHY MANNING. *Up the Hill Paddock*

exhibit yearly in "group" shows in Christchurch, but they have no apparent unity. Theirs is a protest against conventional aspects of painting, but conditions in Auckland seem more congenial for progressive development, as within the "Rutland Group", formed in 1935. The work of some of the younger members of this group still reflects characteristic regional influences. This is evident through the splendid draughtsmanship of Roy Stenberg and Clifford



"BARC." *Nocturne.* (Water-colour)

Murray, and in the conscientious figure compositions of Margaret Thompson. But most of them have developed a personal outlook and an individual style that make their work extremely refreshing. Ron Tizard, an older member, shows a mature colour sense and sound draughtsmanship in his landscapes and in his oils of industrial subjects. Helen Brown is an individualist, who, with an economical control of brushwork in her water-colours, displays strong



H. LINLEY RICHARDSON. *Old Maori Woman*. (Red and Black Chalk)



GEORGE WOODS. *Manu*. (Aquatint)



ROY W. STENBERG. *Isla*. (Pencil)



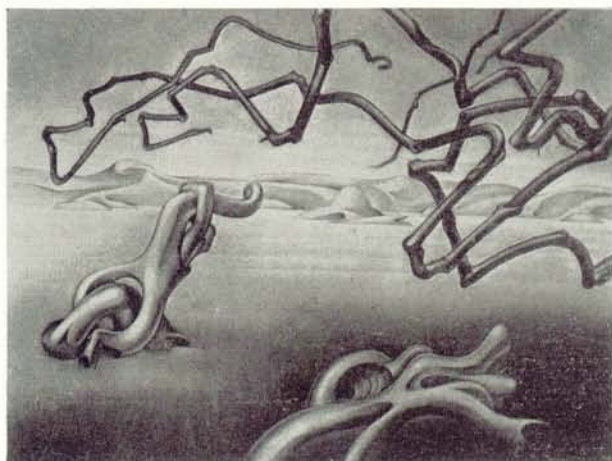
LEO BENSEMANN. *Maori*. (Wood Engraving)



emotional qualities and a feeling for the essential character of landscape and streets. Strength of emotion characterizes also the oils of Vida Steinert and Jocelyn Harrison-Smith. Joan Lillicrap and Joan Blomfield in oil, and May Gilbert in water-colour, show strong elements of design and colour, as do also Alison Pickmere and Bessie Christie. May Smith, less strong in draughtsmanship and technique, has an intuitive romanticism and unusual sense of colour. Colour—subjective, dreamlike colour—is the mark, too, of the “feminine” work of Madge Clayton, often semi-abstract and very inventive. All these young painters are vigorous and modern in outlook, and give rich promise for the future.

A generation ago, it was realized that art and art education was at a low ebb in New Zealand and that the impact of fresh ideas was vital to healthy growth. An organized effort was made to bring artists from Britain to posts in technical colleges and art schools. Some of these, anticipating the romance of a Gauguin in the South Pacific islands, were disappointed at finding a backwash of uninspired Victorianism, and returned to Britain; though Christopher

ERIC LEE JOHNSON. *Abstract—Soft Stone with Worn Shell and Wood.* Water-colour. (Courtesy of Harry H. Tombs Ltd., Wellington)  
Below: GORDON WALTERS. *Composition, Waikanae.* (Conté Drawing)





Perkins stayed long enough to use his own keen intellectual insight and powers of draughtsmanship and painting to create a strikingly new conception of some aspects of New Zealand life and landscape, which gave our contemporary art a salutary shock. Pioneering in cultural matters proved as urgent and as necessary in this century as material pioneering did in the last. Some of the men who remained

have had a stimulating effect on the course of art. A few have become so absorbed in teaching and in the wider field of adult art education that they have had little energy for personal creative work. G. A. Shurrock, J. A. Johnstone and the late William H. Wright, however, besides teaching, have done excellent work in sculpture and crafts. A. J. C. Fisher, a fine draughtsman, with a Leonardo-Slade three-dimensional form emphasis, has had, along with John Weeks, a definite influence on the work of the young artists of the northern province. W. H. Allen and R. N. Field have both done good portraits and landscapes, but the latter's best work is in stone carving. His small figure of a *Maori Woman* has fundamental sculptural qualities of a high order. The appreciation of form in sculpture, however, is not highly developed. It is therefore not surprising that the sensitive work of New Zealand's own sculptress, Margaret Butler, should receive less recognition than it deserves. In sculpture, national and provincial patriotism has inspired the erection of several important 1914-18 war memorials, notably the fine equestrian bronze, in Wellington, by R. O. Gross.

Perhaps the most significant evidence of a maturing consciousness of the value of art is in the field of education. The art of children is being recognized and encouraged, and greater emphasis placed on art and craft in primary and secondary schools and colleges, by more specialized

RUSSELL CLARK. *Maori*. (Wood Carving)  
R. N. FIELD. *Wahine*. (Serpentine)



teaching (some quite brilliant work has in fact been done) and by a progressive directive policy. In advanced art training the institution of an art diploma course at the Canterbury University College School of Art has given graduate status to artists. The establishment of the state-subsidized National Art Gallery in the capital of Wellington, in 1936, has provided a permanent home for the national art collections. Important exhibitions of British, Canadian and Australian art have been held there, but the great educational potentialities of this institution lie in the future. The government-sponsored Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art aroused considerable interest throughout the Dominion. The art societies of the four main centres have maintained exhibition facilities in their galleries and have also contributed in sending exhibitions to the smaller towns,



JAMES TURKINGTON.  
*Restaurant Mural*



MARGARET BUTLER.  
*Miriama Heketa. (Plaster)*



JOHN WEEKS. *Figure Composition*. Below: E. MERVYN TAYLOR. *Legend of Maui*. (Wood Engraving)



four of which, Wanganui, Nelson, Hamilton and Napier, have now well-established art galleries.

The influx of colour prints of traditional and modern painting, and the growth of art libraries, considerably strengthened by the Carnegie Corporation's fine gifts of books and prints, have given greater opportunities for the study of the world's art. The quarterly, *Art in New Zealand*, too, had for many years an important and enlivening effect in bringing attention to art within the Dominion, and in giving scope for independent criticism.

But we in New Zealand need, most of all, refreshment and stimulus by visual contact with works of art from abroad. In music and literature the world's greatest works are available to us, but the opportunity of studying originals of the finest overseas painting, sculpture and crafts, is rare. The advance made during the past decade would indicate that New Zealand art is virile and sufficiently developed to absorb the best art from overseas, and, at the same time, grow from its own roots.

# NEW ZEALAND WAR ARTISTS

OF the work of New Zealand artists serving overseas, two large oils by J. Bowkett Coe are impressive as authentic and revealing statements of the physical and mental suffering of many of our fighting men. As paintings they are too arresting and shocking to win wide appreciation; but as works of art, created with intense emotion, they are among the few really significant paintings to come out of New Zealand's war. The extreme terror and nervous strain endured by forward troops in jungle warfare could hardly have been expressed with such poignancy and uncompromising conviction had not the artist been a combatant himself, and had he not possessed the integrity of thought and feeling to paint in a manner free from the formal art training from which he had just emerged.

The work of another young artist, Austin A. Deans, also shows a revolutionary change. His accomplished but

rather conventional paintings, executed in off-duty time in Egypt, have little resemblance to those produced later, when, as a prisoner of war in Germany and Poland, he had stimulating contacts with more mature artists. With experience of the grim realities of life, study and contemplation and personal experiments in painting, his art has been imbued with a more dynamic and purposeful outlook.

Of the three commissioned official war artists, Russell Clark has invested all his work with fine qualities of colour, design and draughtsmanship without loss of documentary truth. He has employed a wide range of painting technique from impressionism to semi-abstractness. Though this may seem inconsistent in the work of one artist, it assumes considerable importance as an indication of the artist's effort to create a mode of representation to express the many and varied aspects of the Pacific war—land, sea, and air.

J. BOWKETT COE. *Patrol, Vella Lavella, 1 October, 1943*



AUSTIN A. DEANS.  
*Prisoner of War, Poland*



MAJOR PETER MCINTYRE. *Patrol at Dawn—  
 New Zealanders in Long-Range Desert Group*



LT. A. B. BARNs-GRAHAM.  
*Loading at Vella Lavella for the Green Island Convoy. (Pencil)*

LT. RUSSELL CLARK.  
*Fairmiles and Convoy leaving Torokina Bay, Bougainville. (Water-colour)*



The more static aspects of war in the humid tropical jungles of the Solomon Islands are presented in the work of A. B. Barns-Graham—some of his paintings convey a feeling and sense of an all encompassing jungle, where fighting is not spectacular and even movement may mean death; but his subdued colour and conscientious draughtsmanship, though more successful in portraiture, seem somewhat prosaic owing to his preoccupation in recording the incidents of objective vision.

The swift and dramatic type of warfare of the desert provided Peter McIntyre with subjects that were visually exciting, and most of his work, executed with considerable technical virtuosity, presents action and realism. His experience as an official war artist is unique. The Greek campaign gave him the opportunity of picturing New Zealand troops in action, and he covered the battles of one Division right through the war, from Greece, Crete, Egypt, Libya to Italy and Trieste, thus giving a continuity that makes a singularly complete historical record.

Many other New Zealand artists did interesting paintings and drawings of war scenes and events, but mainly as recreation, or as a form of escapism from the rigours and at times the monotony of life. Exhibitions held in Egypt, Italy and New Zealand aroused wide interest, and some of the more significant work has been acquired by the New Zealand Government for the national war collection. R.H.

# MAORI ART

By W. J. Phillipps

As a race the Maori people had and still have their own peculiar instinct for beauty; but that beauty is not necessarily our conception of it. The art of the Maori is the writing of a race who never learned to write. It is the outpouring of an inner urge for expression along definite lines which can be understood and appreciated by all. The Maori artisan does not copy but exercises his originality inside given and definite limits—limits which he dare not pass if he would gain the respect and approval of his compeers. His carving art is essentially curvilinear, and in this differs from the art of the remainder of Polynesia. The majestic scenes of bush, lake, and mountain had no artistic appeal to him that he should reproduce them in painted design; but following in the conservative path laid down by his forebears he limited his art to three features, namely, the human figure, a bird-headed man, together with a peculiar being called *marakihau*, and decorative designs consisting of a variety of rafter and rectilinear patterns.

*The carved house:* In each native hamlet or fortified pa of former days, it was usual to find at least one large carved assembly house superior in size to all the rest. Features of such an old-time house can be seen in a painting of a carved house which once stood on the island of Mana, near Wellington. The porch slabs are uncarved; but the ends of the barge boards or *maihi* exhibit typical designs, and at the apex the carved head represents the owner. Above are figures symbolizing other ancestors.

In some parts of New Zealand the carved house was said to symbolize a man, generally a revered ancestor. The barge boards were his arms; the ridge-pole was his backbone; the rafters were his ribs, and the doorway his mouth. Nothing was so real to the Maori people as the reverence they gave to the memory of the dead, in particular their main tribal ancestors, even though those ancestors may have been dead for hundreds of years. From them they inherited their lands, their home, and their prestige or *mana*; so every Maori of importance knew his genealogy or *whakapapa* stretching back into the dim past. So the inspiring urge which led to the production of the many carved figures of ancestors was founded in racial sentiment and tradition.

In any short article it is impossible to do justice to the manner in which the Maori carver portrayed the human figure. Suffice to say that in most cases the body proportions were considerably distorted and a conventional figure was presented which bore little resemblance to the revered ancestor it was intended to represent. Usually, the head was enlarged and the legs shortened. Distortion appears to have relation to the fear of *tapu* (things sacred). The Gods made man perfect; and who is man that he dare copy their



*Poupou. Detail of Vertical Carved Slab,  
Interior Wall, Tukaki, Te Kaha, Bay of Plenty  
Below: The Tribal Ancestor, Tukaki, showing tattoo design*





Vertical Carved Slabs alternating with Woven Reed Work, Tukaki

handiwork? So in order that no evil might befall the carver he modified the human figure to an amazing degree. Gradually this distortion takes on its own peculiar beauty, and appeals to the Maori mind in joy or in sorrow. It arouses the emotions and the observer needs must take heed. It is strong and virile—art demanding recognition by its own peculiar merit or demerit.

**Tattoo:** In the art of facial tattoo the Maori expert reached a higher degree of perfection than did any other uncivilized race. In fact, in the case of important chiefs, so completely had the face been covered with designs that further progress was rendered impossible. The patterns were drawn on the skin with amazing accuracy by the *tohunga whakairo*, who was a trained master-craftsman. A small bone chisel was used to puncture the skin by means of tapping with a mallet; and a prepared pigment was rubbed into the wound so made. Naturally, this was a very painful process; and a fully tattooed head sometimes took years to complete. An analysis of the types of design used in tattoo shows, firstly, spiral types with anything from two to six volutes running outwards from a central point, and, secondly, the use of rafter pattern designs on the forehead and the cheeks.

The amount of care devoted by the Maori to face tattoo had its basis in the unchanging law of *tapu*, and the head of man (particularly that of a chief) always was sacred; also in carving the amount of care lavished on the heads of ancestral figures is very noticeable. Here we have an art that has developed from a religious basis. Early settlers in New Zealand learned greatly to admire well-tattooed faces; but it is an art that now has vanished for ever.

**Clothing:** Three garments were worn by the old-time Maori. These were a cape or cloak (*kahu* or *mai*) fastened, usually, on the right shoulder to leave the right arm free;

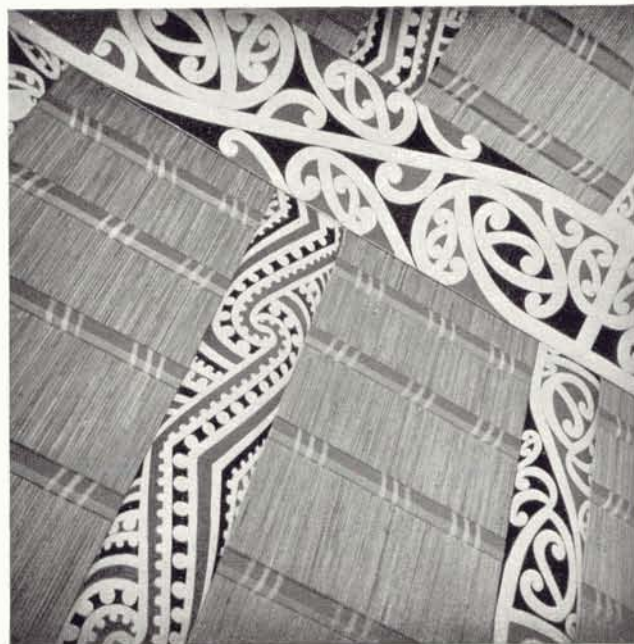
a kilt or *rapaki* which reached to the knee and originally was of thick woven fabric, and an apron or *maro* worn only by women. For the most part these garments were made from the fibre of the common flax (or *harakeke*, *Phormium tenax*), and were woven by a tying process more or less peculiar to the Maori people. All superior garments were adorned in some manner or another.

The most valued type of cloak was the *kahukura*, made of strips of dog-skin sewn on to a base of woven flax fibre. Brown and white strips of skin often alternated; and strips of longer hair were used on the borders. Another common type of cloak was the *korowai*, which was a plain garment ornamented with black thrums spaced across its surface. But it is in the *kahu taniko* (a cloak adorned with a close woven border termed *taniko*) that the most unusual series of designs appear. These designs, worked chiefly in red and black, consist basically of the zigzag line, the triangle, and the diamond, and seem to link up with similar designs in ancient Egypt, Assyria and Persia.

For beauty of artistic effect, the feather cloaks were garments *par excellence*. Each feather was attached separately to its woven background of flax fibre; and numerous designs were constructed by using feathers of different colours. Cloaks made of huia feathers were highly prized because of the soft texture of the feathers. The designs in use on feather cloaks are allied to *taniko*; so triangles, wavy lines, and diamonds are in common use. Feathers used on these cloaks to form the colour patterns are from the huia, parrakeet, tui, pigeon, and kaka parrot, and vary considerably in colour and texture, being brown, blue, and green, as well as red and white.

As an illustration of how a European art conception may

Detail of Painted Rafter Patterns, Interior of Roof, Tukaki





General View of New Meeting House, Tawake Heimoa, Te Awahou, Rotorua

be thoroughly and completely adopted by a native race, the draught-board pattern has been used on Maori feather cloaks for the past hundred years, and now is a recognized Maori design. Early traders brought draught boards to New Zealand and taught the Maoris to play draughts. The game spread to the most remote parts of the interior and the draught-board design became very familiar.

Many kits or *kete* of various types were adorned with designs derived from wood carving, *tukutuku*, or *taniko*. Sometimes the design is derived from the plaited fabric itself—intertwining in black and white bands; but there is so much variation of *kete* adornment that we can only conclude that there was no standard design as in *taniko*, and each artist chose her own pattern. Alternation of adornment impresses the observer most in *kete* designs; for many copy the basic *raupong* of wood carving, i.e. a ladder pattern running beside a series of three parallel lines.

There was a period dating approximately from the

seventies of last century to the early years of the present century when it seemed that the Maori race was declining at too great a rate ever to survive with the new European civilization; but with better economic conditions, new educational facilities, and health measures, a new and virile people have emerged. A demand for the adaptation of all that is best in Maori arts and crafts has been heard from many of the leaders of the Maori race. A "School of Maori Carving" was for a period established at Rotorua and young men from all over New Zealand were trained in the carving art of their forefathers. Many women, chiefly under the direction of Sir Apirana Ngata, have been taught the art of *tukutuku*, a method of panel adornment for houses; mat-making and weaving have not been neglected. Gradually, new communal assembly houses are being erected in many parts of New Zealand, carved and painted in traditional manner, and younger generations are taking a pride in their race and lineage.



*House on Steep Slope. Vernon A. Brown, Architect*

## ARCHITECTURE IN NEW ZEALAND

*By Cedric Firth*

ALL things considered, architecture in New Zealand had a propitious beginning. Being largely of English origin the early settlers of 1840 made as few modifications as possible to their Victorian way of life, but they brought with them a mature culture and a tradition of good craftsmanship. They were equipped with the acumen and drive necessary to transplant their culture into a new and strange country. Apart from shelters of a temporary nature they built with skill and refinement. Planning was simple and straightforward; design was clean and vigorous. The materials at hand were put to intelligent use. Timber building, or clay used monolithically, took the place of the brick construction of Europe. Timber there was in abundance—and to this day domestic architecture has remained predominantly of timber. Some of the early timber churches are outstanding examples in which the character of wood as a building material has been appreciated.

Later in the century the standard of taste declined, faithfully reflecting the English architectural standards of the day. Ornamental woodwork was used with abandon and became the leitmotif of town and village architecture. Wealthier citizens built mansions in the grand Victorian manner, embellishing with disconcerting ingenuity the imposing and pretentious façades. Houses, churches and other public buildings were erected in a way that ignored the essential qualities of the materials of which they were built. Architectural thinking was in terms of stone construction. Timber was fashioned to resemble stonework, complete with imitation joints and other details. Cast-iron columns sprouted acanthus leaves and other herbage. Only now are we recovering from the æsthetic standards of those days.

Communications with the U.S.A. were established early in the life of the New Zealand colony. As time went on the influence of America, whose development more closely



*Government Departmental Building, Wellington, designed by Public Works Department. The structural steel frame is faced with local stone*

*Dixon Street Flats, Wellington. A reinforced concrete structure, designed on the cellular principle, by Government Housing Department. The block contains 116 dwellings*



paralleled that of a new country than did that of England, became more pronounced. To-day the typical New Zealander lives in a bungalow very much of American pattern. It is built of timber, or sometimes of brick, and it is roofed with corrugated iron or with tiles. Plans are usually simple and economical but the general form, both internal and external, is restless and fussy and is lacking in clarity. In a striking number of cases the orientation of New Zealand houses is faulty. There exists a firm objection to the placing of sanitary accommodation on the street side of the house; living-rooms must face the street, even if it be the south and therefore sunless side.

Only a small percentage of houses built are designed by architects. Most of the houses that are so designed are free adaptations of Georgian or Colonial styles. While this work is quite out of touch with the general trend in modern architecture the best examples are pleasant and have carefully conceived, sensitive forms that are much superior to the freakish and pedestrian work that masquerades as, and is sometimes mistaken for, work in the modern spirit.

Shortly before World War I important advances were made in the use of reinforced concrete and steel construction. Hennibique helped to pioneer reinforced concrete in this country. Since then most large commercial and public buildings have been built of these materials. Reinforced concrete and steel demanded a new architectural form, and even if much of the earlier work tended to be coarse and raw-boned, it at least resulted in a greater simplicity. To-day, most commercial and public buildings bear a close similarity to their conservative American and English counterparts. Since the disastrous earthquake of 1931 all but the smallest buildings are designed to be earthquake resistant. The earthquake problem is a serious one to any architect whose taste runs to lightness in architectural form. It is conceivable, however, that lightness as a quality of form does not appeal particularly to our New Zealand mind for so many of our newer public buildings display a solidity that is possibly not entirely due to the requirements of an earthquake-resisting structural system.

While earlier work was dominated by traditional influences the present overall tendency in design is for greater freedom together with a greater devotion to the functions the buildings are expected to perform. During the last few years the advance in school design has been quite marked. Schools have tended to become more free in their conception and have developed their own utilitarian style with doors or windows opening on to a covered verandah.

For half a century it has been part of government policy to provide financial assistance by way of loans to people who wished to build houses. Towards the end of the depression it was felt that house building required an added stimulus, and in 1936 the Department of Housing Construction was formed to provide that stimulus. The aim was to provide not "workers' dwellings" but houses at least equal in



*House in Wellington. Cedric Firth, Architect*

quality to those inhabited by ordinary typical citizens. While the planning of the houses and housing schemes is a function of the Department, construction is usually carried out by private contractors. Housing Department schemes are rather conservative in spirit—a reflection of the cultural conservatism of the New Zealand people—but they have a unity that is lacking in the typical New Zealand street picture. The density of State housing works out at about four houses per gross acre. Approximately five-sixths of the houses are fully detached and one-sixth semi-detached.

In a country such as New Zealand where the detached house is the ideal, any excursion into the erection of apartment blocks is viewed with some suspicion. In addition to detached-house projects in suburban areas the State has erected many groups of "multi-unit" dwellings. These vary greatly in size from a humble four-unit block to a group—the largest block built contains 116 dwellings.

Badly planned towns are not as common in New

Zealand as overseas since the plans prepared for the early colonists at least provided a fairly orderly arrangement of streets, parks and open spaces. The intelligent control of amenities is fairly widely recognized. At the moment much interest is being excited by the large-scale land development plans and the schemes for new villages and suburbs under preparation by the Government. Careful provision is being made for schools, shopping and community centres, recreational facilities and open spaces. In large housing schemes about 15 per cent of the gross area is being set aside for general recreational purposes. An attempt is made to plan each area so that traffic is concentrated on to defined traffic roads in order to leave purely residential streets completely free from all but originating traffic. The treatment of streets as regards carriageway and footpath widths, and type of construction, is varied according to the volume of traffic they are expected to bear. Extensive use is made of recessed courts and culs-de-sac. Shops are arranged

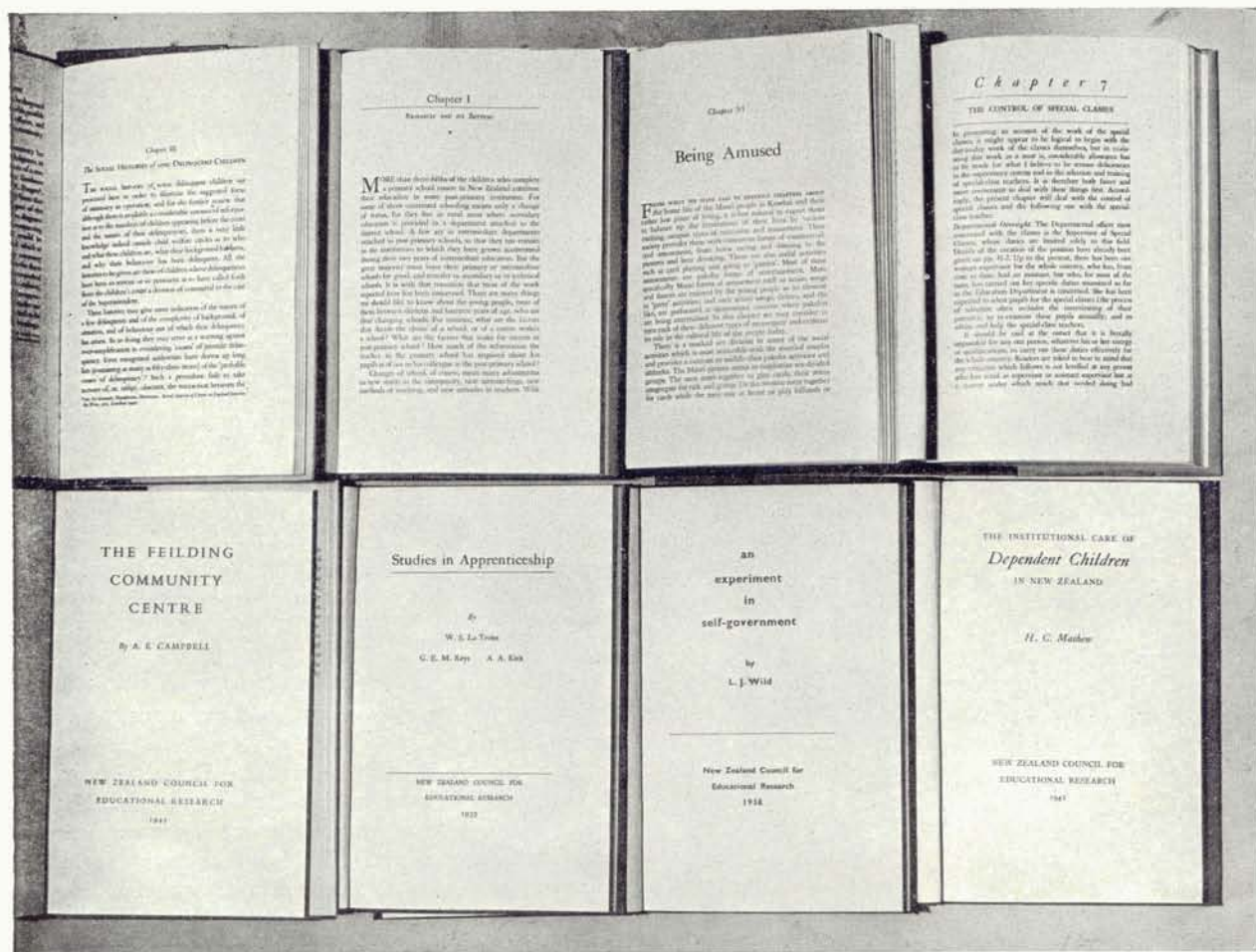


*General Motors Factory, near Wellington. Left: House at Timaru, showing marked European influence. Humphrey Hale, Architect. Below: A Typical Street Scene in a Government Housing Development, designed by Government Housing Department. The absence of power poles and fences adds to the feeling of order*

round shopping courts adjacent to street corners, with ample planned parking space close by.

While the work of Mies van der Rohe, Gropius, Corbusier and Wright is appreciated by a small but increasing number of progressive laymen, the contemporary architectural movement makes slow headway against conservatism, particularly in the field of larger buildings. There is little support from either official or commercial sources. While a handful of the younger architects and a large body of architectural students are conscious of the new developments in architecture, the amount of good work in the modern spirit is very small indeed. The next decade may see their influence in New Zealand.





Examples of book work designed by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research

## BOOK PRODUCTION IN NEW ZEALAND

IN the early days of colonization, book production in New Zealand was naturally a very thin trickle, but a few of the volumes then issued were, by Victorian standards, quite respectable, with some standards of dignity in setting and press-work. Then, till about ten years ago, there was a big slump, and our production became provincial in the worst manner. In the mid-1930's there were signs of hope, and now it may be said that a fair proportion of the serious books published in New Zealand can stand unashamed in almost any company.

This change is mainly due to the intelligence and discrimination of two public bodies, the New Zealand Council for Educational Research and the Government Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington; to the stimulating talk and example of R. W. Lowry, of Auckland, a man of many presses, erratic but brilliant; and to the very able practical work of the Caxton Press, Christchurch. The

programme of the Council for Educational Research involved a good deal of publishing, and it determined from the first to set as high a standard as possible. The Department of Internal Affairs had its chance in the Centennial celebrations of 1940, and set out deliberately to show what New Zealand could do. Working with co-operative printers, both these organizations have been able to stimulate the acquisition of new type-faces, and the awful poverty of earlier days has been enriched by Baskerville and Granjon and Bembo.

The Caxton Press was started in 1935 by Denis Glover, who had as an undergraduate at Canterbury University College contracted an abiding passion for typography. Glover's work, carried on in partnership and close collaboration with Leo Benemann, has mainly been on a small scale—that is, rather small editions of not very big books, verse or prose. But there has been an astonishing amount of

it. For their larger books they have had to rely on a trade linotype setter, doing the rest of the work on their own premises; while they have carried on continuous and sometimes very delightful experimenting with hand-set volumes on very slender resources of type. Glover has been wise in building up a selection of small quantities of distinguished types for jobbing.

Neither the Department of Internal Affairs nor the Council for Educational Research has gone in explicitly for "fine" printing. The ambition has been to produce a good article in the orthodox tradition of bookwork, a reasonable marriage of type and margin and binding,

**ko te whaikorero  
AARA O RITOWERA**

**M**E MIHI ATU MATOU i te  
tuatahi ki ta koutou powhiri whakamiharo i a  
matou i Rotorua nei tae noa ki nga ngahau i  
tapiria mai ki te taha; e whai ana i tou kawa i  
to te Maori hei whakanui i te manuhiri tuarangi.

I haere mai matou he karere mai no nga topito  
o Ingarangi, na ona Iwi maha, na nga Whare e  
rua o te Paremata kaumatua o te Emepaea, na

15

without extravagance and without meanness. Most of the printing for both bodies has been done by Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., in Wellington and Christchurch. The Caxton Press, with very slender resources, has at least been able to follow its own whim in choosing texts for production, and contributing to sensibility in typography as it has consistently done, it has also contributed materially to good writing and lively thought. "In typography I don't think bulk or even influence is of any account", Glover has recently written of conditions in New Zealand. "What is important is that for the first time we have a handful of people consciously and intelligently engaged in the problems of printing." It seems probable that in the end, nevertheless, the influence of the handful will be real and wide.

J. C. B.

**A BOOK  
OF  
WOOD EN-  
GRAVINGS**

BY E. MERVYN TAYLOR

THE CAXTON PRESS

MCMXLVI

Title page of a book printed by the Caxton Press, Christchurch. Below: Page from "Abel Janszoon Tasman and the Discovery of New Zealand", produced by Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, 1942, and printed by Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., Christchurch. The initial is in red. Left: Text page in Maori from "A Message to the Maori People". Produced by Department of Internal Affairs

LANDFALL IN UNKNOWN SEAS

**S**IMPLY BY SAILING IN A NEW DIRECTION  
YOU COULD ENLARGE THE WORLD.  
YOU PICKED YOUR CAPTAIN,  
KEEN ON DISCOVERIES, TOUGH ENOUGH TO MAKE THEM  
Whatever vessels could be spared from other  
More urgent service for a year's adventure;  
Took stock of the more probable conjectures  
About the Unknown to be traversed, all  
Guessed at golden coasts and tales of monsters  
To be digested into plain instructions  
For likely and unlikely situations.

All this resolved and done, you launched the whole  
On a fine morning, in the Name of God  
On a fine morning, the best time of year,  
Skies widening and the oceanic furies  
Subdued by summer illumination; time  
To go and to be gazed at going  
Into the nameless waters of the world.

O you had estimated all the chances  
Of business in those waters, the world's waters  
Yet unexploited.

But more than the sea-empire's  
Cannon, the dogs of bronze and iron barking

7

**ARTISTS ON ART.** *Compiled and edited by Robert Goldwater and Marco Treves. (New York: Pantheon Books Inc. London: Kegan Paul.) 21s.* It is a matter of regret that master painters and sculptors have been inconsistently recorded in their views on their own professions. With remarkable taste and assiduity, the editors of this volume have collected an anthology of extracts from writings or speech by nearly 150 artists ranging in time from Cennino Cennini in the fourteenth century to Picasso in our own era. They include all the greatest who have written about their art. There are notable omissions: Giotto, Giorgione, El Greco, Rembrandt and Turner. The fault is not the anthologists': we must blame the reticence of the artists themselves. There are 100 illustrations, largely self-portraits and portraits of the artists, and half the contents has been translated for the first time. As Constable said so rightly: "I am anxious that the world should be inclined to look to painters for information on painting." This volume supplies a fascinating wealth of such information.

**METODO E ATTRIBUZIONI.** *By Bernard Berenson. PONTORMO. By Giusta Nicco Fasola. (Florence: Arnaud.)* These are two further volumes in the series "Monografie e Studi D'Arte Antica e Moderna" which we have already noticed in connection with those on the sculptors della Quercia and di Banco. The presentation is similar.

We particularly welcome Mr. Berenson's book, an important work of art scholarship, but also of criticism—for Mr. Berenson is never the mere scholar. It is substantially that which appeared in 1927 as "Three Essays in Method" (Oxford), but there are added to it some notes on the theory of method which appeared in the second series of "The Study and Criticism of Italian Art" (Geo. Bell & Sons, 1902) and an essay on the attribution to Signorelli of a work previously given to Piero della Francesca. There are very recent notes to these essays and 135 plates in illustration of them. It is edited and introduced by Signor Raffaello Franchi.

Pontormo is a sixteenth-century Florentine who, in spite of the National Gallery works, is relatively little known

## NEW BOOKS

in Great Britain. Signor Fasola's book should correct that unjustifiable neglect. The lucid text is illustrated with three colour-plates and 46 half-tone reproductions.

**FLOWERS OF THE WOOD.** *By C. J. Salisbury, C.B.E., D.Sc., F.R.S. A SELECTION OF THE ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD BY THOMAS BEWICK. Commentary by John Rayner. (London and New York: Penguin Books.)* These two additions to the King Penguin series maintain the high standards set by the earlier volumes and are an example of quality in production which could be taken to heart by publishers and producers of many more expensive works. The colour-plates in "Flowers of the Wood" are fine examples of co-operation by plate-maker and printer.

**BALLET ANNUAL.** *Edited by Arnold L. Haskell. (London, A. & C. Black.) 21s.* The first issue of a new annual review of the Ballet, which covers the years 1939 to 1946. It includes a review of outstanding events, ballet in America and the Soviet Union and the London archives of the Dance.

Balletomanes of all descriptions will study this work with interest and eagerly look forward to the second issue. Most of the contributors are well known, including Mr. Cyril Beaumont, author of "Ballet Design Past and Present". The photographs and coloured plates are well chosen.

**A HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE ON THE COMPARATIVE METHOD.** *By Sir Banister Fletcher, D.Lit., P.P.R.I.B.A. (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd.) 52s. 6d.* This is a new and improved edition of Sir Banister Fletcher's master work. Reviewing an earlier issue, we described it as without rival and an amazing feature the wealth of illustration lavished upon it. These comments still stand. There can be no more comprehensive volume surveying the architecture of the world through the ages and nothing more exhaustively illustrated. Possession will be coveted by every architect and student and the fortunate layman who secures a copy will find its riches inexhaustible.

**SOCIETY OF ARTISTS BOOK 1946-47.** (Sydney, N.S.W.: Ure Smith Pty.) 8s. 6d. It is always a pleasure to see the recent work of Australian artists as exemplified by the exhibition of the Society of Artists in Sydney, N.S.W., and published in this annual volume. In addition to the illustrations, the articles in the present issue are most entertaining, especially that by Margaret Preston on Silk Screen Printing, where she describes the process in detail. Mrs. R. G. Casey, who opened the 1946 exhibition, quoted the inscription over the entrance to the Museum of Byzantine Art at Dumbarton Oaks—"Art is man's escape from the sorrows of the world"—a phrase which is well worth remembering.

**VINCENT VAN GOGH. Introduction and Biographical Notes by John E. Cross. (London: Saturn Press.) 12s. 6d.** It is difficult to welcome with any enthusiasm yet another book on Van Gogh, but this one is really so pleasantly produced and such good value at present prices, the introduction is so modestly competent and it is so difficult to get the other books, that we are indeed glad to see it. There are ten colour-plates and twenty in half-tone. They will supply the beginner with reproductions of the best known works, but they will not reveal much to those already acquainted with Van Gogh. A quick check seems to show, for example, that there are here only six pictures not reproduced in the well-known Phaidon selection. A little more originality in the choice would have been more welcome to the "old hands", but probably the series is not planned for them.

**BRITISH SCULPTURE. 1944-46.** *By Eric Newton. (London: John Tiranti Ltd.) 6s.* Containing sixty-four illustrations, this little book shows a broad cross-section of the varying influences and character of contemporary carvers and modellers. There are, however, glaring omissions, notably Eric Kennington—difficult to understand when other sculptors are represented more than once. An admirable little volume that should delight the collector of bound monochrome reproductions of works of art.



## *Sir Isaac Newton,*

*who has been described as the greatest man of science of all time, is best known, to the general public, for his famous observation of the falling apple. This led him to formulate his Laws of Motion, the fundamental laws on which the branch of mathematical physics known as dynamics is based. His achievements in optics and mathematics have obscured his work as*

*a chemist. Newton's contact with chemistry began when he was at school in Grantham, where he lodged with an apothecary. Throughout his life he displayed great interest in the chemistry of metals, much of his work being of a very practical nature, such as the production of alloys for use on the mirrors of the reflecting telescope he designed.*

*Newton maintained a private chemical laboratory at Trinity College, Cambridge. His principal service to chemistry was his clarification of the "corpuscular" theory of matter. This theory, which held that matter consisted of large numbers of small particles, was applied by Newton to explain the facts he observed while experimenting. Newton was born at Woolsthorpe, near Grantham, on Christmas Day, 1642. Entering Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1661, he became Professor of Mathematics in the University at the very early age of twenty-seven. He was appointed Warden of the Royal Mint in 1696, and Master three years later. This great Englishman died in 1727, leaving behind him a reputation which has increased with the passing of the centuries.*



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# FAME IN NEWLYN

IT was about sixty years ago when Stanhope Forbes first realised the artistic possibilities of Newlyn, a small village on the South Cornish Coast, and together with Frank Bramley successfully founded the "Newlyn School." In due course many others were attracted to the busy fishing village and so the very life of the Cornish folk was portrayed.

A technique which was very much employed was the broad style showing the actual brush work by which means the results were obtained — an innovation which, perhaps, owed something to the impressionists. So Newlyn became an important artists' colony and the colours produced by Reeves and first introduced to the



Art World in 1766, and which had already been used so consistently by famous artists, became more widely known and praised by the members of the new colony. Thus the ever-increasing fame of Reeves' colours has been firmly established throughout the world.

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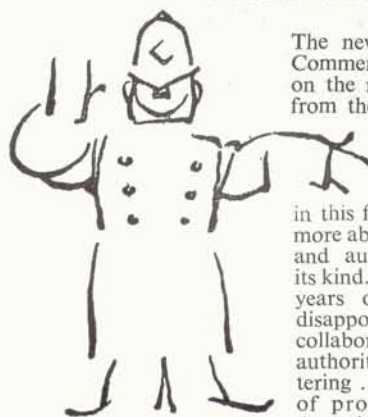
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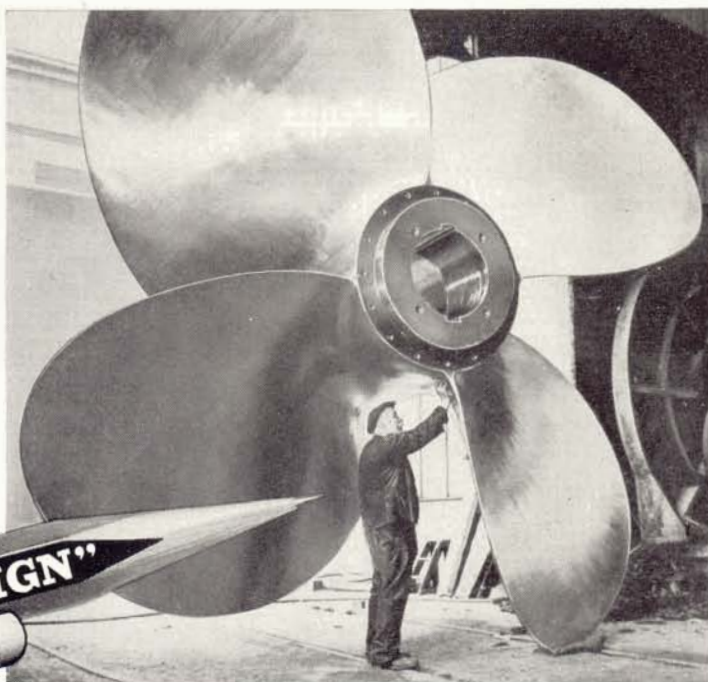
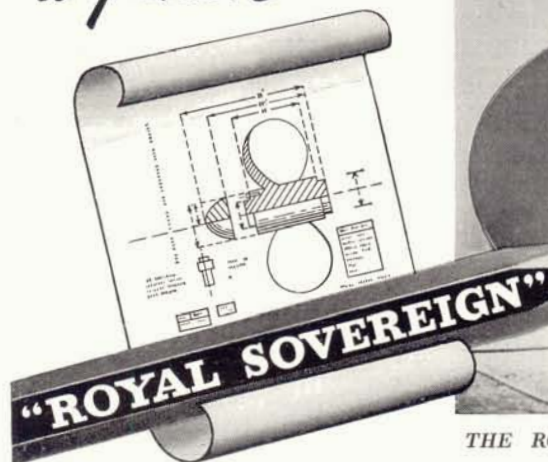
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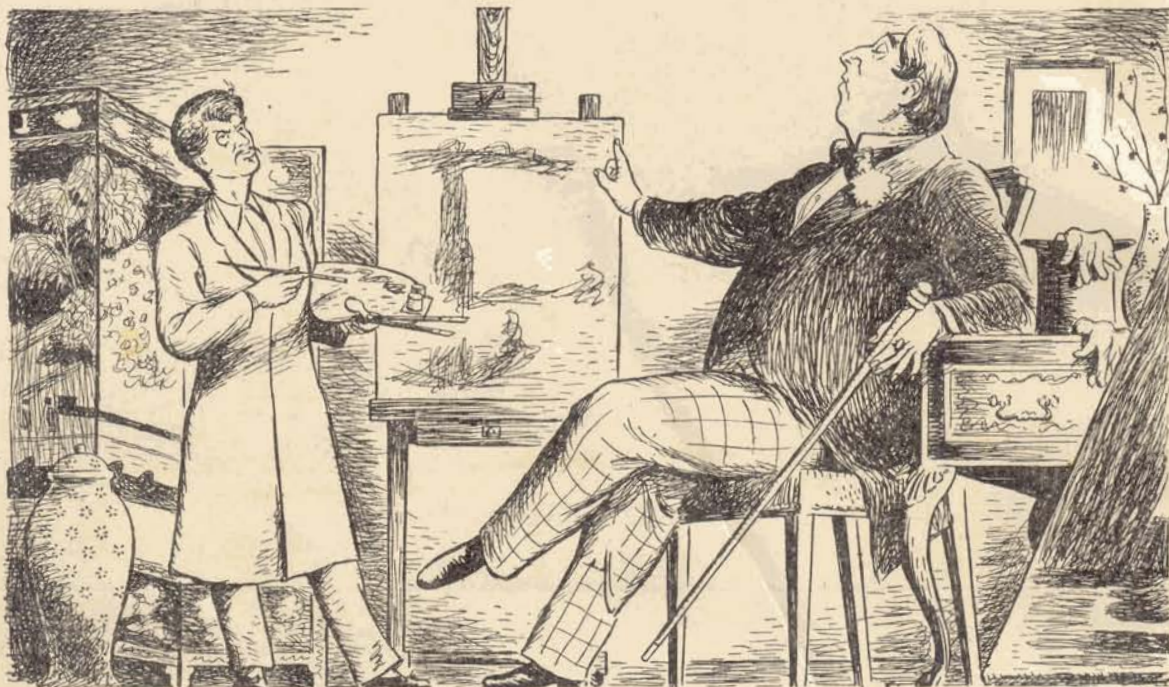
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