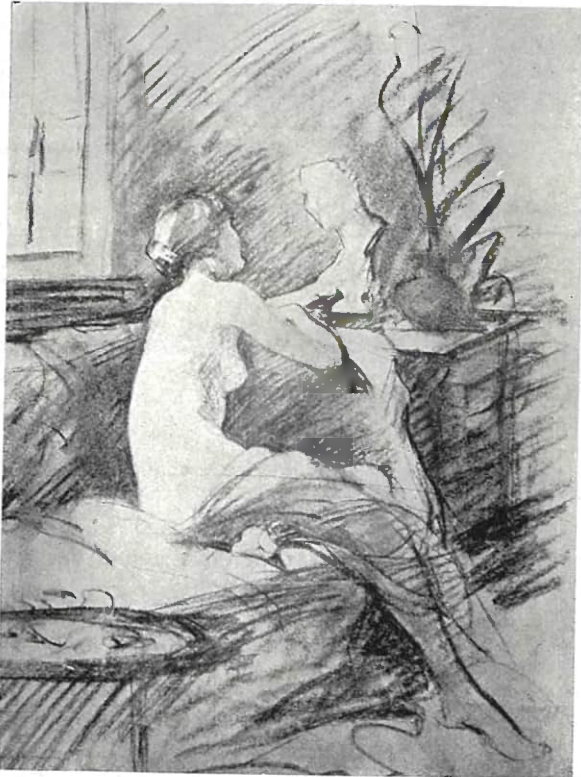


BULLETIN
OF THE
NATIONAL ART ASSOCIATION
OF NEW ZEALAND

A RECORD OF INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

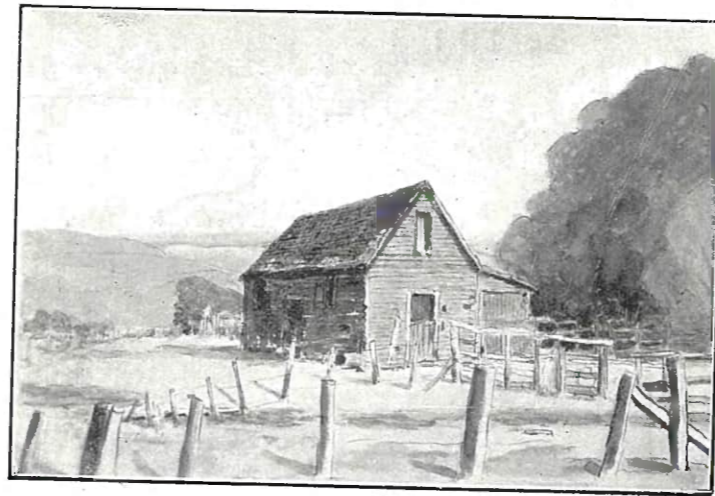
Wellington, October, November and December, 1925



Charcoal Study for
The Two Models.

By M. E. R. Tripe

In the completion of the large canvas exhibited at the N.Z. Academy Annual Show in October last, the artist kept very closely to her first conception of the subject.



From a Water Colour.
By J. A. Heginbotham.

The old farm buildings of the early colonial days supply picturesque subjects for the painter, and the artist has in this sketch made good use of the material at his disposal.

1925

The year ended December 31st, 1925, marks an important advance in the progress of Art in New Zealand. In no previous year have so many exhibitions been held, in none have the sales of pictures been so large, and in no other year probably has so much space in the daily newspapers been devoted to Art and exhibitions. No show of paintings now runs its course without fully detailed descriptions of the pictures on view, and for many of the reviews specially engaged and capable writers furnish candid criticism.

The National Art Association, which came into being during the latter days of 1924, was responsible for a number of exhibitions in country towns, to the residents of which an Art exhibition was one of the rarities of life. That there was room in New Zealand for an artist-controlled body organising on national lines, was by many regarded as out of the question, but

the support accorded the Association in the first year of its existence, and the success attending its operations, are proof, if proof were needed, that the spirit of progress in Art is abroad in the land just as much as it is in manufacturing and in all other walks of life.

Few countries offer within as small a compass so much as New Zealand does in its variety of magnificent inland and coastal scenery, therefore, landscape and marine paintings fill the major portion of exhibition wall space. The life of the country, with its many interesting features which provide innumerable picturesque subjects worthy of the brush of the painter, has not as yet found many exponents, nor has anything of importance been done in the way of historical subjects. Early colonial life and the many stirring incidents of the Maori war days offer a rich supply of subjects for picture making, but so far very few have delved into this fascinating field. Considerable research is



In the Otira Gorge Country.
By Grace Butler.

New Zealand's Southern Alpine range, with its ice-capped peaks, rocky bluffs, and dense beech forests, furnishes unique painting grounds for the ambitious worker. In places like this, where Mrs. Butler is painting her large canvases, the difficulty of dealing with brilliant sunshine, clarity of atmosphere, and quick climatic changes, tests the endurance and skill of the artist to the utmost.

necessary for results in this domain, but there is a wealth of picturesque incident awaiting translation into pictures. Maori legend, too, rich in the mytho-poetic fantasy of a native race in which the artistic spirit is inherent, and who possessed a genius for the personification of all natural phenomena, winds, rain, clouds, mist, cold, heat, winter, summer, water, fire, the ocean, space, and other things innumerable, provide abundant material for those who care to let imagination run riot in the realms of Rangi, Rongo, Tane, and Tu. Not to many is it given to experience the subtle teachings, or to read the lessons contained in the beauty and majesty of Nature, but if proof were needed that Maori mentality was influenced by ceaseless observation of natural phenomena, that proof is to be found in the metaphysical abstractions, allegorical fancies, and mytho-poetic concepts in which the learned Maori of olden days indulged.

The Maori genius for personification produced many quaint-concepts and few indeed are the pictures that have been attempted to illus-

trate them. There is in this land of poetic fantasy a mine of unexplored wealth awaiting the curious and imaginative investigator.



The Mist Maiden.
By William E. Tiller.

Maori mytho-poetic fantasy is rich in subject matter for the artist who cares to spend some time in exploring the ramifications of Polynesian ideology. The Maori had a perfect genius for the personification of all natural phenomena, and to him the winds, the clouds, rain, mist, cold and heat, summer, and winter, water, and fire, and all other things were sentient beings, living and multiplying.

ART AT THE NEW ZEALAND AND SOUTH SEAS EXHIBITION

The Art Gallery erected in Logan Park in connection with the Big Exhibition now running a successful course at Dunedin, is well filled with interesting and valuable collections of paintings, sculpture, etchings, and drawings, selected from the mass of works available in British, French and American studios, as well as with comprehensive offerings from artists resident in Australia and New Zealand.

The Fine Arts Section, so well arranged under the capable direction of Mr. E. Marsh, affords a rare opportunity to painters, and those interested in the Fine Arts and good craftsmanship, to see what is being done in other lands, and an impetus to Art in New Zealand, not only in painting and sculpture but in the mother art, architecture, must surely follow.

To the interested visitor there is in the New Zealand Provincial Courts and the Government Pavilion as well as in the British, Canadian and Australian Courts, much to repay careful scrutiny, and the lover of mural painting and the arts of decoration will welcome the lavish use of painting and modelled work which has transformed wall spaces into areas of beauty.

In traversing the various sections, the question ever present is: Why, in our public buildings, departmental stores, and places of amusement, cannot we have the beautiful always before us in mural painting and modelled design, instead of only on the rare occasions when exhibitions on a vast scale are promoted? In our Town Halls, Post Offices, Banks, Churches, and other institutions with ample interior spaces now barren of anything to delight the vision, there are rare opportunities awaiting liberal-minded leaders of thought and men of wealth who could, if they so desired, have the haunts of men transformed into temples of

art. To the architect also there is an opportunity to see how wall space can be effectively beautified, and to note how much more interesting a decorated surface can be than a plain flat field of paper, plaster, or wall-board.

Grey—the greyness of the sea and of the battle fleet, is the dominant note in the colour scheme of the British Government Court, and within the grey stone walls which utter a note of bulldog strength and indomitable staying power is a display of ancient and modern craftsmanship, rich, simple and dignified, which seems to sum up the history and greatness of the grey North land that is "Home-land" to many New Zealanders and their descendants. Nothing finer in dignified and simplified arrangement has hitherto been seen in the Dominion, and exhibition authorities here may well take note for future guidance.

In the Canadian Court, the art director, the painter and the modeller have worked "con amore," and the ensemble resulting from their co-operative efforts gives, as it should do, a distinctively Canadian character to the setting in which the Northern Dominion's products are so effectively displayed.

Much has been done in the Australian Court to emphasize the vastness of the Commonwealth and its wealth of productive power, but withal it lacks that distinctive national note in arrangement and in decorative scheme which so impresses the visitors on contact with the other sections of the Exhibition. Australia has at call many capable artists and decorators who, had the opportunity been given, would have revelled in adding something of the beauty and sunshine, and of the feeling of illimitable space, so characteristic of Australia. The lack of the distinctive national note in the Commonwealth Court emphasizes the fact that without the co-operation of the artist and his imaginative

vision exhibition directors can achieve only results dull and uninteresting which are quickly felt by visitors. Where beauty and interesting features abound the pulse of the visitor is quickened and the mind is more definitely impressed.

One of the Dunedin institutions which benefits directly and materially by the Exhibition is the Public Art Gallery, for which a number of pictures have been purchased from the Free Arts Section. Among the canvases secured are a La Thangue, Terrick Williams, Solomon J. Solomon, Pittman, Hughes Stanton and other works of note. The purchases have been made out of the generous bequest of £10,000 left by the late Mr. Peter Smeaton, of Dunedin, the interest on that amount being allocated for the Otago Art Society to buy the works only of British artists. This condition of the bequest is to be operative for a period of twenty years.

CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY

LOAN PROPOSAL

The promoters of the proposal to borrow £25,000 to erect an Art Gallery for the city were, no doubt, keenly disappointed when the ratepayers' votes were counted, and the result announced—for the Gallery, 1,905; against 2,860. Notwithstanding the fact that the Canterbury Art Society offered the city the whole of its collection, valued at £10,000, and that a leading citizen was prepared to make a gift of his valuable collections of paintings and object d'art, ratepayers failed to rise to the occasion. Out of 18,000 voters less than 4,000 took the trouble to go to the polling booths. It is possible that a further opportunity will be presented, and it is to be hoped that Christchurch citizens

will then show that the fine things of life are of greater importance than the merely mundane.

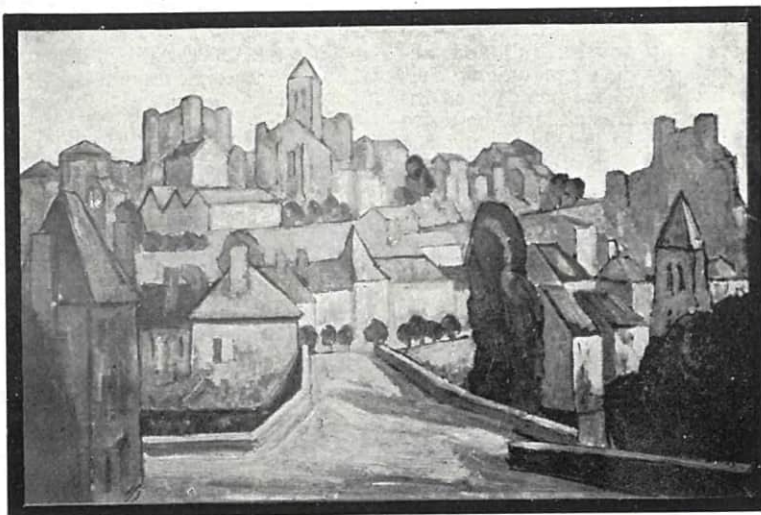
* * *

At his London exhibition, despite the criticism of metropolitan artists and a few of the art critics, Norman Lindsay sold everything he had on exhibition, viz., 31 etchings and 23 watercolours. The Leicester Galleries, where the exhibition was held, cabled asking him to forward another collection which, they estimated, could be sold at even higher prices than the first.

A CANVAS BY THE ENGLISH ART CRITIC--ROGER FRY

In looking at this strange picture, the original of which may be seen on request by visitors to the Wellington Public Art Gallery, one is forced to accept as artistic representation something very remote from all his previous expectations and to develop a new tolerance in his judgment on works of art, a tolerance which may be destined to bear further severe strains in contemplating the works of the school to which Mr. Fry elects to belong.

The pseudo-scientific and analytic method of this art critic and painter has forced him to produce a picture which lacks design and formal co-ordination, in fact his vision has reduced the tone-volumes with which he deals to a mere patchwork or mosaic of coloured areas without architectonic framework or structural coherence. It is an excellent example of the chaotic fancy and caprice of a disordered imagination. Mr. Fry is, apparently, a devoted disciple of the Dr. Denham Ross summation, which is that a composition is of value in proportion to the number of or-



Champerly, France.
From the Oil Painting
by Roger Fry.

derly connections which it displays. Dr. Ross restricts himself to the study of abstract and meaningless forms. In contemplating the various shapes within the frame that borders this small canvas, we apprehend slowly the relation of line to line, tone to tone, and volume to volume; we realise somewhat painfully, that the painter had in mind buildings erected in a land devoid of architectural institutes and constructional engineers. We also cannot help feeling that Mr. Fry must have felt himself in a similar position to those architects who worked for the Cistercian order, founded in 1098, upon whom was imposed by the good St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the peculiar architectural hypocrisy that while their churches should be as magnificent and imposing as possible, they must have an appearance of extreme simplicity and austerity. Such is the thought that runs through the mind when one considers Mr. Fry's

curiosity in psychological expression.

According to this well-known London art critic, "it is one of the rarest of good fortunes for an artist to find himself actually understood and appreciated by the mass of his educated contemporaries."

'Tis rare, indeed.

A BIG DEVELOPMENT

Mr. W. E. Chapman, formerly (34 years ago) on the staff of the Canterbury College School of Art, returned recently to the Dominion on a trip from the land of the star-spangled banner, where he now holds a high position in the Art world of New York city.

To Christchurch pressmen, a few days ago, he made some interesting remarks on painting in New Zealand, and on art in general, which we take the liberty of broadcasting to association members.



From a recent
Water Colour.
By J. A. Heginbotham.

In the Hutt Valley, near Wellington, the artist has discovered some of the old homes, dating back to the early colonial period, and with the quaint buildings of that time has produced a picture of rare beauty and picturesque charm. In just such a place as this the noted Wm. Swainson, farmer, botanist, ornithologist and artist, would have made those beautiful pencil drawings of native trees and birds, which are being collected and treasured to-day in that repository of historical data, the Alexander Turnbull Library.

After study in Paris, Mr. Chapman went to America, there to win a leading place among portrait painters. He is, therefore, qualified to speak.

According to him, "New Zealand scenery has had too overpowering an effect, with the result that landscape painting here has been too topographical. Instead of expressing through the medium of the brush, an abstract idea or so, there has been a tendency among artists to be copyish merely. Not until painters here are content to come down to a few simple planes, will they overcome the problem of landscape painting in New Zealand."

"Mind you," said Mr. Chapman, "I find New Zealand art emerging from the purely topographical. There is a big development." After these somewhat elementary statements on art in New Zealand, he spoke of American painting.

"Beautiful landscape work is done in America," said Mr. Chapman, "but as most of the painters receive their training in Paris, the French traditions are followed mainly. It is by portrait painting however, that the bulk of the artists make their living. If they paint a portrait of a wealthy person, and their work is recommended to others, then they will do very well for themselves. The competition, however, is great, but an artist who can do good work constantly is assured of success."

"Of course, among the youngsters there is a favouring of the jazz element in art, but the tendency does not seem to be as strong now as it was five years ago. That work would be right enough in its proper place, that is, in decorative schemes, but it has no place in pure art. There is no drawing and no hard work in it."

From the subject of art, the visitor passed to Economics, and unburdened himself on questions of imports and exports.

NEWS AND NOTES

According to the Paris correspondent of the "Evening Post," "the extent to which the foreign artist has invaded the Paris Art world has, perhaps, not been fully realised, but it is made apparent by the fact that of the 932 exhibitors at the Salon d'Automne, 339 are foreigners. The country which has the largest representation is Russia, with 48, but it is closely followed by the United States, whose representatives number 42. The Poles, led by Kisling, have 36, and the Japanese, who include the inimitable Fujita, are well up the table with 30. Great Britain has 26, and Ireland one. There is even one German exhibitor. There is some grumbling among French artists at what they call the excessive hospitality extended to mediocre foreign artists, and it is suggested that the foreigners should have their own salon with their own jury.

ART ON THE HOARDINGS

Formerly the young artist with talent, but no market for his wares, often starved in a Latin Quarter garret. To-day, there seems to be considerable demand for his services, and his masterpieces have greater publicity than even if they were hung in the Salon. To a great extent, he is taking the place of the printer of coloured posters. To-day is the age of the gigantic in this form of advertising, and along the Grandes Boulevards it has been found more practicable to haul a huge canvas by ropes into position on the hoarding than to affix huge sheets of paper. Upon the canvas is already a rough sketch of the pictorial advertisement which is to adorn it, and while the admiring crowd looks on, the artist, sitting in a "chair," which is lifted or lowered by pulleys, fills in the outline in lurid colours with a brush the size of which Degas never

dreamed. The young artists who are engaged in this work may have lost many of the ideals with which they set out, but their purses are certainly heavier.

* * *

Mr. Harry Batsford, Director of Messrs. Batsford, Ltd., Publishers, London, in an address during a recent Exhibition in London of the New Forest Group, said, "It was exceedingly difficult to find employees who had any art knowledge, and he estimated that 90 per cent. of English people scarcely know the meaning of Art," and this after many years of Technical Education and South Kensington Art Instructors! If, as Professor Lethaby says, "Art is thoughtful workmanship," and Mr. Batsford's statement a just estimate, is it to be wondered at that competition presses keenly on British manufacturers?

* * *

Writing from New York under date of November last, just after a visit to Paris, the American artiste, Francesca del Mar, who visited the Dominion a few years ago and subsequently wrote a most interesting account of her sojourn in New Zealand says:—The condition of art in France and England is most depressing; a real decadence. It is now up to the younger countries like yours and mine to give an impetus. The so-called "modern art" has failed; its insincerity alone would have killed it. Artists must no longer look to the savage for inspiration, but to the Great Masters of Europe and build upon their splendid structure a vital living art, expressive of the thoughts and ideals of to-day. America is doing this in architecture; the sky-scraper has developed into a noble and handsome edifice, typifying the life of our time with its demands and its ideals. Painting and sculpture being the handmaidens of architecture, these three must go forward together. At present there is a tendency to utilize marbles, low toned mosaics,

and almost monochrome decorative motives, thereby getting a most harmonious feeling of atmosphere; but that does help to develop a school of mural painters.

Artists will, no doubt, learn from present-day development what is wanted in mural decoration, and will modify their colour schemes to meet the demand. Puvis de Chavanne did this for his time, but to-day the demand is for a warmer, almost monochrome effect.

The Exposition des Arts Industriels in Paris had little to show that was encouraging, the newest note being the use of white metal—steel or aluminium—for decorative effects in casements, lintels, inlays, in flooring and walls and ceilings."

* * *

Many years ago George Moore wrote, "Everything that has happened in England for the last thirty years goes to prove that systematised education in Art means artistic decadence."

The Art of a nation is an epitome of the nation's intelligence and prosperity. . . . Study the question in the present, study it in the past, and you will find but one answer to your question—Art is nationhood.

All the great artistic epochs have followed on times of national enthusiasm, power, energy, spiritual and corporal adventure.

* * *

In his monthly article "Studio-land," in the Christchurch "Sun," the Australian writer, William Moore, makes a timely suggestion which, if adopted, would solve the initial problem in connection with the country town Art Gallery. Commenting on the remarks of the Mayor of Blenheim (Mr. M. McKenzie), at the opening of the Association's Exhibition that, "while an Art Gallery in the town was desirable, there was much to be done before it could be accomplished," Mr. Moore writes,

"That's true enough, but couldn't a temporary Gallery be started? If the Council or some public-spirited citizen could lend a room for this purpose, a start could be made. I don't want to quote Australia, but the experiment in Castlemaine, Victoria, is worth mentioning. A start was made when a citizen lent the Committee a room, then the Government gave a larger one in the Post Office, and now they are raising funds for a complete Gallery. The population of the town is well under 10,000."

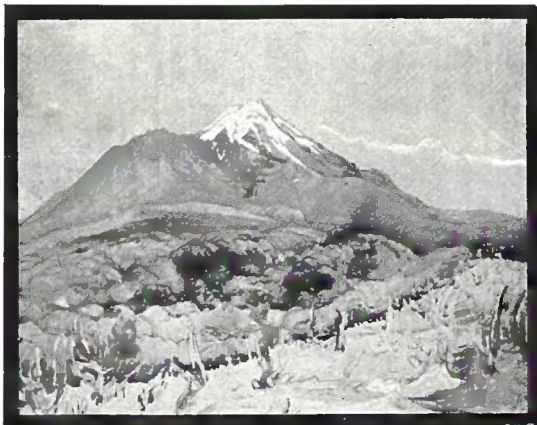
In many New Zealand towns there must be a room suitable for a permanent exhibition, and the National Art Association awaits with interest the offer of some public-spirited citizen to either lend a room or erect the building in which a small collection of pictures can be placed.

An ample supply of pictures is available, and the Secretary will be glad to hear from those to whom the development of Art in New Zealand is of more than passing interest.

One of the finest and most lasting memorials that could be erected in any town to the memory of sons who gave their lives in the Great War would be a Public Art Gallery. What in comparison are blocks of granite, tablets of bronze gates to public parks, or a carillon?

ART UNION

The Members' Art Union will be drawn on the 15th of January. The present membership admits of the allotment of seven paintings, of a total value of £55, distributed in prizes of £15, £10, £8, £7, £6, £5, and £4 respectively. Announcement of winning numbers will be made in the Wellington newspapers, and in the next issue of the "Bulletin."



Mt. Egmont.
By D. K. Richmond.

Taranaki, land of milking machines and butterfat, is dominated by its magnificent volcanic cone, Mt. Egmont, which is as well-known to New Zealanders as Fujiyama is to the Japanese, and to the artist it is being looked to more and more as a paintable proposition. The mountain, with its snow-mantled peak, and broad shoulders clothed with native bush, is not always as clearly defined as in Miss Richmond's finely-drawn water colour. Round its 8,000 feet of bush, and rock and snow, mists quickly gather, and clouds condense, and from whatever angle the giant is viewed it presents a picture ready for transfer to paper or canvas.



Gathering Kumara.
From the Sketch by
J. McDonald.

Present-day Maori life, with its wide range of subject, work in kainga or cultivation in the fields, provides opportunities to the artist who cares to get on good terms with the kindly natives and can make himself at home with them. Indoor occupations, such as mat and basket making, the preparation of flax fibre, and the making of fishing traps and nets, as well as the outdoor work of planting, harvesting, and storing corn and kumara, provide subjects of endless variety.



On the Glacier.
By Grace Butler.

In both Islands of the Dominion, within easy reach of the artist, are great ice fields, wherein are to be found subjects in plenty for picture making. On both the Eastern and the Western sides of the Alpine range in the South, as well as on the slopes of the volcanic mountains in the North, glacial flow from summit to terminal face provides to the painter a rich array of forms and translucent colour which call forth the highest effort.

WELLINGTON WAR MEMORIAL

The conditions of the competition for the Wellington Citizens' War Memorial are now available. The Memorial is to be erected on the triangular piece of ground fronting Parliament Buildings at the corner of Molesworth Street and Lambton Quay, and all designs must be lodged with the Citizens' War Memorial Committee not later than 4 p.m. on 31st July, 1926.

In paragraph 1 of the conditions describing the site, it is stated that a portion of the Parliament Buildings grounds can, at the competitors' option, be included in the memorial site. The portion referred to is that immediately to the west of the triangular-shaped plot extending from the existing street boundary wall line to not more than three feet inside the Parliament Buildings grounds. The existing pathway east of the boundary wall is to be retained as a permanent public thoroughfare.

DESIGN OF THE MEMORIAL

The character of the design, including the treatment of the site, is, subject to the following requirements, left entirely to the taste, knowledge, and discretion of the competitors:—

(a) The Memorial shall be non-utilitarian in character.

(b) The Memorial shall be faced (at least) with stone produced from New Zealand quarries. Exception to this may be sculpture and tablets, etc., in bronze. If

New Zealand marble is suggested it must be selected for freedom from prominent and unsightly markings. All materials must be of the most durable kind, ensuring the maximum of permanence, and the construction must be sound and designed to resist earthquake shocks.

(c) The total cost of the memorial must not exceed £20,350 inclusive of lay-out, but exclusive of architect's commission. This amount is the full extent of the Committee's resources, so that competitors, in order to allow the usual margin of 10 per cent., must work on a basis of cost of £18,500. Any allowance made for bronze work or sculpture must allow of the engagement of artists and craftsmen of the highest repute. Should the successful competitor be unable to obtain a tender within 10 per cent. of this amount of £18,500, the Committee reserves the right to demand the refund of the amount of the premium paid him, to dispense with his design and services, and to take whatever means the assessors may suggest to erect the Memorial.

(d) The recording of soldiers' names is not required.

(e) Competitors are advised to consider the adjacent Parliament Buildings so that their designs will not, in general style, be antagonistic to these.

(f) It is suggested, but not made mandatory, that the strip of land belonging to Parliament Buildings grounds, and referred to in paragraph 1, should be utilised for some such feature as an open screen wall, or other erection that will not adversely affect the view of Parliament Buildings grounds.



Our Rock-bound Coast.

From the Oil Sketch by Marcus King.

Curving bays, and bold rocky promontories are distinctive features of the New Zealand coast, and in the vicinity of Cook Strait, frequented by Wellington artists, there is no lack of material for effective work, and here, too, the marine painter has a rare choice of subject. Climatic changes are fairly sudden, and calm morning seas may quickly be awakened to thundering surf.

Mr. W. H. Gummer, A.R.I.B.A., has been appointed by the Committee as professional adviser, and with Mr. J. P. Firth, C.M.G. (chairman of the executive), and Mr. A. Fair, K.C., Solicitor-General (member of the executive), as assessor of the competition.

PRIZES AND ARCHITECT'S FEES

The competition is open to architects, only, and awards of £250, £150, and £100 respectively will be made to those competitors whose designs are placed first, second, and third. The amount of the award will be deducted from the competitor's commission on the work being proceeded with. The awards will be published before or at the opening of the exhibition of designs.

The fees of the competitor to whom the erection of the Memorial is entrusted will be according to the scale of charges of the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

THE COMMITTEE'S HOPE

Adequate provision is made to ensure the anonymity of the competitors.

Immediately after the awards are made the Committee proposes to publicly exhibit all designs submitted for a period of one month.

The Committee hopes that these conditions will result in the production of a Memorial which, by nobility of conception and perfection in execution, will symbolise the glory and perpetuate the memory of the men of Wellington city and suburbs who gave their lives at the call of the Empire.

The conception is open to architects, sculptors, and others of British nationality.

ART

I've watched some famous artists paint

In studios both queer and quaint;
While strains of music soft and sweet

Were used to stimulate the urge
That through each artist soul must surge

Before his canvas is complete.

There may be those to whom Art means

Achievement only through their dreams;

But Art to me is nothing less
Than new creation at its best;
Perfection, that has passed the test
Of Canvas, Instrument, or Press.

And he whose copy can inspire

The world to listen or admire,
Is daily pouring from his heart

A masterpiece of perfect line
Of merging colour and design,

And what is this, but Art?

—Ann Falwell Ellis.

One-man shows have been a feature in Sydney of late, and the market is fairly flooded with artists' work, and mostly at moderate prices.