

A few publications have been added to the art section. This portion of the library has been freely used by many artist members of the Academy of Fine Arts, as well as by art students. The opportunity to consult works, technical as well as historical, is greatly appreciated.

A number of volumes of scientific and historical interest have been contributed to the library by other Departments of the Public Service, and thanks are due to the Department of Internal Affairs, Geological Survey, Education, Defence, and Tourist and Health Resorts for their generous gifts.

Several works of interest to students of New Zealand history have been presented by Messrs. J. H. Farquhar and J. W. McDonald, and by Miss Christie, of Sydney. The Returned Soldiers' Association has donated from the estate of the late Colonel W. B. Rhodes six volumes of the "Encyclopædia Edinensis," published in 1872; "History of France" (three volumes); "History of England" (two volumes); and a rare volume of Australian views engraved on sheet copper by a convict named Preston, and published in 1820. The Rev. D. D. Westervelt, of Honolulu, has forwarded two of his recent works on the mythology of the Pacific—viz., "Hawaiian Legends of Ghosts and Ghost Gods," and "Legends of Volcanoes." The Ordinances and Acts of the Provincial Governments of 1840 to 1860, received from the Dunedin Athenæum Committee, have been placed with the National Historical Collection. Books and publications have been duly recorded and card-indexed as they came to hand.

*Museum Galleries.*—No changes of any moment have been made in the arrangement of exhibits. Acquisitions during the year have not been sufficiently large to necessitate alterations, and space for smaller specimens has been found in the existing cases. The Maori garments and weapons received from the estate of the late Mrs. Hunter Blair, of Edinburgh, have been temporarily stored in the Sydney Street building. The inlaid writing-table only has been placed on exhibition. This unique piece of craftsmanship may safely be said to be the finest example of cabinetwork ever produced with New Zealand woods. A few Maori skulls in an excellent state of preservation were received from the Geological Survey Department. A few small examples of Maori craftsmanship and about thirty artifacts of Melanesian origin were purchased in the auction-room, and help to fill out our collections. A collection of boomerangs, nullah-nullahs, spears, clubs, shields, and other examples of Australian aboriginal workmanship, numbering over eighty specimens, purchased from Mr. Clement Wragge, late Government Meteorologist in Queensland, have been placed on exhibition in the main gallery. Eleven pieces of tapa cloth, bequeathed to the Museum by the late Thomas Trood, Esq., Acting British Vice-Consul at Apia, Samoa, have been received and stored until such time as space is available for exhibition.

A number of paintings, drawings, and photographs hanging on the walls of the stairway leading to the library and upper galleries were removed to provide space for the frames containing the photographs of officers and men of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force who have gained distinctions while on active service. Frames containing the portraits of three or more sons enlisting from one family have been given a place on the walls, and, in addition, a large number of photographs taken by the official photographer with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force on the western front have been framed and placed on view. We shall very shortly be faced with the difficulty of finding space for the photographs coming to hand, but with the rearrangement of exhibits which must be made as soon as captured war material arrives it will probably be possible to find space for the entire collection on the ground floor. Lantern-slides of the official war photographs received from the Department of Internal Affairs are being stored for use as may be required.

In the Museum Report of 1915-16 it was recorded that a number of Maori carvings had been treated in solution as a preventive against the wood-boring beetle. It is satisfactory to note that, so far, no recurrence of this destructive agent has appeared in the pieces dealt with.

Mr. Elsdon Best reports as follows:—

On account of the war the printing of Museum Bulletins has been suspended, and advantage has been taken of this fact to turn to the translation of a large amount of Maori matter preserved in the original, and obtained from East Coast and Wanganui sources. Inasmuch as a considerable portion of this matter pertains to anthropogeny and the primal myths of the Maori race, with certain traditions of their sojourn in Polynesia, and is moreover couched in exceedingly archaic language, the task of rendering it into English has been tedious and difficult. It was felt, however, that it ought to be so translated while a few persons yet remain who might assist by the explanation of doubtful passages and the peculiar cryptic utterances that are so marked a feature in matter given by what we may call the educated Maori of past generations.

This matter, now all rendered into English, save certain ritual chants, it is proposed to utilize as a basis for a monograph on the religion, myths, and magic of the Maori folk. So inter-mixed are these three institutions among a people living in the culture stage of the Maori that it is practically impossible to separate them; to do so would entail much repetition. No attempt has been made so far to compile any of this matter. The subjects are far-reaching—indeed, their scope may be termed vast—for such a monograph, if but carried to its legitimate limits, must necessarily impinge upon every activity of Maori life. This work is now proceeding in the form of descriptions of customs, institutions, superstitions, ritual, myths, &c. When completed it will probably have to be resolved into three volumes.

A task that has been completed during the past year consists of a card index of Maori technological nomenclature, comprising the names of all implements, vessels, garments, ornaments, parts of houses and canoes, &c. When taking up this work in the first place it was noted that, though a considerable portion of the Museum exhibits pertain to Maori ethnography, yet little was known as to the names, modes of manufacture, and uses of such exhibits. The above index will render available all known names of such artifacts, and record them for future use, while the series of bulletins being compiled will explain the methods of manufacture and uses.