



THE EMPIRE PAGEANT AT WEMBLEY

Maori girls receive Princess Helena Victoria with a Dance of Welcome.

Photograph: Topical Press.

criticism than having lived for a while in a picturesque town in Belgium, and those, too, who frankly admit that we "don't know anything about architecture, but we know what we like," until we can see what is in the architect's mind—until the whole idea can be realised. Let us remember that the design upon which so much costly printers' ink has been spilt, was the choice of many: chosen upon the grounds of its utility and beauty by those who, presumably, knew what was required and who felt their responsibilities as wardens of Auckland's architectural beauty.

To be frank, New Zealand has but little to pride herself upon in the way of beautiful buildings: this is but natural, for the whole world produces in each century but few public buildings of note. Men's needs, in a young country, naturally turn first, from sheer stark necessity, to utility, rather than to beauty. It is well to remember that even the great cathedrals of Europe were not the products of one man or one age—they evolved from the combined genius of artists and true craftsmen (it then was difficult to draw a distinguishing line between the two), working together with but the one idea: to create truth and beauty. Little did the mediæval artist-craftsman reek of "Styles." He worked in truth and not in terminology. Had you spoken to him of "Neo-Gothic" it would have been as outlandish a term as "Neo-Grec." He was receptive of new ideas—yet his training was received from his father, who had imbibed his craft from his ancestors.

To-day, much study hath turned us pedantically mad, and we look askance on the man who attempts originality, unless his originality is so bizarre as to be beyond the comprehension of any normal being—then it is "clever" and "modern."

However, you have me astride a pet hobby horse, so I would just remind our amateur architectural critics that these same mediæval cathedrals, which appear so to obsess their minds, and which they consider the ultimate peak of architectural attainment, beyond which man's ability cannot soar, were but the expression in material terms of the mentality of the age in which they were built. Architecture, like all true art, is rightly influenced by many things: the mind of the age and the race (pre-war art in Germany should have warned the world of the "frightfulness" of "Kultur"); geographical conditions, material and, most obviously, climate conditions. Forgetfulness of this may be forgiven, for better and more highly trained minds than our Auckland critics would claim to possess have already made the same mistake, and have perpetrated it in the pseudo-classic frigidities with which Georgian architects disfigured England. Gothic made-to-measure by dispirited Socialistic labourers is not the same anthem in stone that was achieved by master-craftsmen inspired by religious motives. Wembley, in the detail he copied ever so closely, can never quite achieve the Taj.

What was suitable for Rheims in 1200 A.D. is not suitable for Auckland in this year of grace; what is beautiful in carved stone is, when imitated in concrete, an absurdity. The changeable, and, too often



Photograph: Topical Press.

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Mrs. Staples Brown (Miss Maggie Papakura), a descendant of a Maori Princess, adjusts the head-dress of Major Dansey, who was responsible for the correct setting and costumes in the Maori tableaux and dances. Major Dansey is a descendant of a great Araro chief.

dour skies of England call for something different from that which is so charming and right in the bright sunshine and genial warmth of Italy—and so the tale goes on.

Therefore, let us pause before we condemn, and, if you will, hesitate before we even faintheartedly praise: at least, let us see the finished picture before we damn the rough sketch.

TOWN PLANNING

Were this but all, Auckland would possess ample evidence of its interest in the mother of the Arts, but public interest is also keenly alive to the possibilities of the proposed City Square that is to grace Auckland's principal thoroughfare. This is the largest experiment in Town Planning ever attempted in the Dominion, and I have before expressed a doubt as to whether we possess an architect with a sufficiently experienced imagination to adequately cope with the scheme. It must be remembered that we shall build not alone for this generation, but for those to come, and by their heritage shall we be judged. It is no light responsibility that rests upon the judges, and we can only hope that they will be able to hand on a scheme that will be a source of pride, rather than a white elephant, to our descendants.

Meanwhile, Auckland is woefully deficient in sports' grounds, and for the upkeep of the few poor specimens that exist, but little money can be found. It would indeed be a worthy monument to the ability and far-sightedness of the civic administration, if they were to take the matter in hand, and remembering that Auckland will one day have to find recreation spaces for ten times its present population, make more than adequate provision for not only the present, but the future, whilst land within easy reach of the city can be obtained comparatively cheaply; whilst yet the mushroom growth of suburbia allows the opportunity to be grasped.

In no city that I have seen anywhere in the world, is that vital necessity of modern civilisation, Sport, so badly provided for as in the "Queen City." This is a reproach that must be removed—and the sooner it is attempted the easier and cheaper will be the remedy.

Better a belt of park lands, thronged (but not too thronged) with healthy young citizens obtaining the finest medicine in the world—vigorous outdoor exercise—than the most grandiose civic scheme. I would almost say that a well-kept recreation ground is a greater credit to a city than a well-stocked library, or a gallery of priceless, and unappreciated, Old Masters.

A hale young citizen in flannels should be a source of greater credit to a city than the most dignified, obese alderman in scarlet and ermine.

OUR COVER:—A ROYAL BABE

The bonny young man who graces our cover is George Henry Hubert Lascelles—Princess Mary's elder son.

KNAVE O' HEARTS.



THE NEW UNIVERSITY TOWER, AUCKLAND

From Albert Park. A fierce controversy has raged regarding the artistic merits of this tower, which is one of Auckland's leading landmarks.

Photograph: Reuell Reynolds, Auckland.