

THE JOLT OF SOMETHING NEW

William Dobell Defends Himself

'AN issue of the "ABC Weekly" recently to hand, contains William Dobell's broadcast reply to those who complained of his prize-winning portrait of Joshua Smith.

I THINK you will forgive me if I have a few words to say following all the criticism of my portrait of Joshua Smith. You may have seen photographs of it in the papers, with comments from people who saw it in the gallery—even from some people who had been picked up in the streets and asked their opinion of the portrait when they had seen only the reproduction in the daily papers.

It was unfair to ask people to judge the portrait when they had seen only photographs of it. Paintings have to be photographed with extreme care by people who know a lot about this particular technique. It is criminal to attempt to get true values and qualities on newsprint with a photograph taken by flashlight. I would be praising these particular reproductions if I said they were bad.

I think there has been very little informed criticism of the picture. The

comments obviously came from an average slice of the public; the type of man that Samuel Butler means when he says: "He does not interest himself in arts, or science, or politics, but he sets his back up with some consonance if any of them show any development unfamiliar to himself." That is exactly what happened with my picture. It was the jolt of something new which is immediately resented by most people.

The Right to Freedom

The people who criticised it didn't wait to find out what I was trying to do when I painted the picture; they just noticed at first glance that it differed from an actual photograph of Joshua Smith, and they objected. People of this type expect a portrait to be simply a coloured photograph; they would restrict the artist to painting things just as they expect them to appear. Like all artists I claim the right to paint things in my own way. If I didn't, I should be doing



WILLIAM DOBELL
Not interested in the word "modern"

things that have been done over and over before, and the work would lack interest.

(Continued on next page)

DO YOU KNOW?

CHILD HAD 3 SEPARATE ROWS OF TEETH!

A case was reported to the International Medical Conference of 1913, in which a child had three rows of teeth, grown one on top of the other.



ESKIMOS of Hudson's Bay believe that if bear's teeth are sewn on a boy's shirt, he will be a good hunter and not afraid of bears.



THE FINNS

of ancient times believed that dental decay was caused by

the tooth worm, which they called the "evil hacker of teeth".



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