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## ART IN POST-WAR NEW ZEALAND

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relegated to the past with the thumb-screw and the tread-mill: it can never make Art palatable to any but a small army of martyrs, who are willing to have tottering legs and brains in the quest of beauty. I, myself, belong to that army, but I don't think many people can be expected to join it.

It is essential in a modern gallery to have ever-changing exhibits, to bring them together in new combinations to illustrate particular themes, to have them few and far between, and beautifully set out and lighted. We have in this respect, an immense amount to learn, especially from the Americans, for if the majority of the earth's art-treasures are to be found in the galleries and museums of Europe, the Americans have certainly developed the art of showing art-treasures beyond any other people.



One is struck dumb by the way in which their galleries are thronged by appreciative thousands, without being in any way unsuitable for connoisseurs or students: they are not merely the costly, unused monuments to national pride that one so often sees in other countries. We should certainly send our custodians abroad for a long period of study, both in Europe and America: we have long recognised the need of such study in the case of libraries, and it remains to recognise it in the case of art-galleries.

### The Artist and His Price

I wish to say a word about the function of our local art-societies in post-war New Zealand. I think there are a number of ways in which they could manage to make themselves a more living influence. I would suggest, first of all, that local artists should systematically lower their prices. For it is a melancholy fact that, though gentlemanly tastes are still extant among us, the gentlemanly purse exists no longer: we are all as poor as church-mice: no New Zealander, except possibly a publican or a doctor, could afford to pay 15 guineas for anything that was not a sheer necessity. I think, further, that loan-collections of local pictures might, with some pushing, be rendered very popular, and that local art might be brought before the public in smaller, more continuous, more accessible, and more varied exhibitions. For though annual shows and private views may make a temporary splash, they are of little value if we follow them with 11 months of quiescence.

The local artist is a man engaged in a fight like St. George with the dragon: he cannot afford to be slack. He must oust from our walls the old monks at their revels, the old Tudor cottages surrounded by rose-gardens, as well as those loosely-clad Greek ladies wandering improbably among temples and peacocks in a landscape suggestive of the Norwegian fiords. And no one who

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