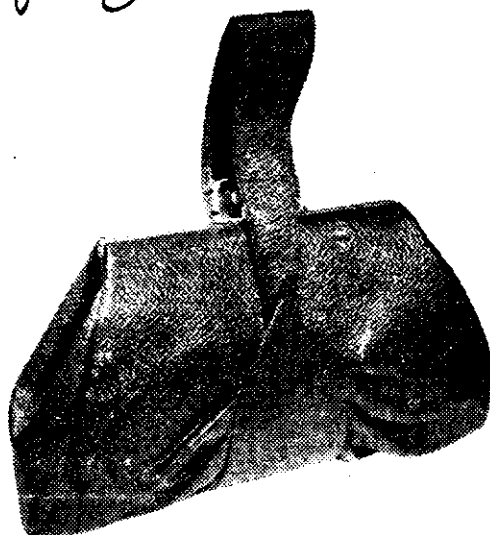


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BACK TO THE ATTIC WITH ART?

"DISCOURAGEMENT, rather than encouragement, is best for the artist," said Roland Wakelin, in a recent interview with *The Listener*, but not all artists appear to be in agreement with this heterodox pronouncement. Upon inquiry, we found a fairly even balance of opinion for and against, as the comments on this page show.

STIMULUS OF HARDSHIP

I QUITE agree that the more an artist has to struggle for recognition the better will be the work he produces in the long run. Too much spoon-feeding is not good for any sort of creative artist, although that is possibly the tendency to-day, with the many scholarships given to encourage artists. Within limits, scholarships are valuable because they bring the young artist to the big centres and into contact with the leading ideas, but there is always a possibility of their having an adverse effect and making things too easy. There must always be the stimulus of hardship and struggle behind the artist to make him fight for success.

—H. H. Tombs

HELP SHOULD BE GIVEN

I DON'T think we should place too much stress on what Wakelin has said. It was only a passing remark which he would probably qualify on more mature consideration. After all, discouragement is only a relative sort of term, and one can't make a sweeping statement condemning any sort of assistance to the professional artist. Personally, I consider that no matter what help artists get from whatever source they must always suffer much more than other people. I think that encouragement such as the awarding of scholarships is very much for the good of the struggling artist. The younger students especially find it difficult enough as it is to get along, and they should get as much help from the rest of society as possible.

—T. A. McCormack

HARD WAY IS BEST

I MUST say I thoroughly agree with what Wakelin has said, and although this may seem an old-fashioned idea, I do think an artist needs to suffer hard knocks before success comes. It is most dangerous for a young artist to think he has arrived before he is properly mature, but this can quite easily be caused by too much encouragement, and it is bound to result in mediocre work. For any artist, if he is to get to the top, discouragement is a good thing; he must go through the schools and get a thorough training. If he has too



much encouragement and thinks he can sell whatever he paints, then it is the end of effort as far as he is concerned.

—Stewart MacLennan

THE WIND AND THE LAMB

I THINK that discouragement is good for artists, but the wind should be tempered to the shorn lamb, and most of the lambs are shorn in some manner or other.

—"Barc"

TOO MUCH BACK-SCRATCHING

MY own experiences, in contrast with those of other artists, make me think I have, perhaps, been fairly lucky. I didn't become a full-time artist till I was 25, when I gave up my job as a jewellery engraver. I would say, however, that discouragement in the form of constructive, informed criticism is good, but indiscriminate praise is very bad. I often feel that there is too much "back-scratching" going on amongst a number of our artists, with the result that although in their own opinions they are pretty good, they are actually not getting anywhere at all. That is the wrong kind of encouragement.

—Mervyn Taylor

YES AND NO

HISTORICALLY, such a statement as Wakelin's could be justified. Frances Hodgkins, for instance—when she was in Paris she achieved a fairly modest success with watercolours of a certain type, but suddenly gave it up and lived a life of great hardship and poverty in order to change her style. You might say that this was accidental or voluntary discouragement, but the point is that she was prepared to take the risk. Whether that life of poverty

(continued on next page)



"An artist who wants to break new ground must expect a certain amount of discouragement"

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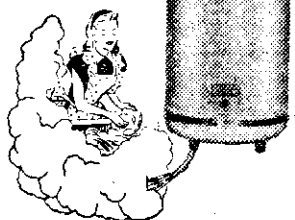
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