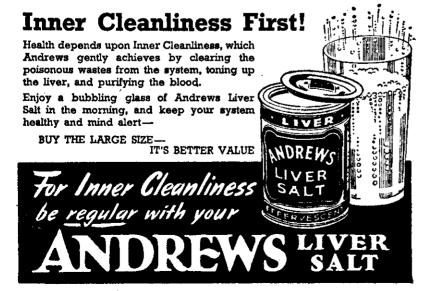




THE FGG PRESERVER THAT NEVER FAILS



MILITARY **TATTOO**

War Means More Work For The Specialist In interior Decoration

THE window is full of highly-coloured pictures, of hearts and roses, of flags and bull-dogs, of swords and anchors, and, of course, of women. Underneath each picture a price. For 5/- a simple rose and scroll, or an anchor or a cross, for 7/6 a map of New Zealand or Australia, for 10/- a Union Jack, and is on up to £10 for a masterpiece in six colours depicting an eagle attacking a coiled snake. "Artistic, decorative, fashionable," says a window placard, and there is a reassuring photograph of a young lady having a butterfly added to her elready over-decorated back by a tattooist who is taking merely a professional interest in it.

Inside the shop more designs are displayed. The long tables in what used to be a tailor's workroom are covered with sheet after sheet of bright drawings, still more hang from the walls. As you get further into the privacy of the shop, the hearts, roses, and chaste tombstones of the window display give place more and more to mermaids, hula girls, and the masked ladies of the Folies Bergeres. And at the back of the shop, on the other side of a door marked "Fitting Room," sits the tattoo artist himself. A faint buzz of electricity shows that he is already at work. We push the door open quietly and perch ourselves on the table.

The patient this time is a sturdy young merchant seaman, who endures with equanimity the 2000-a-minute jabs of the electrically-driven needle. He's having his forearm decorated with a rose and a scroll. Already the main outlines, including the "Margaret," have been traced in black, and the artist is now filling in with red the embellishing rose. "Does it hurt?" we ask the young seaman, sympathetically. But though the prick of the needle has no power to disturb him, our presence has. He murmurs "No," sheepishly, and fixes his eye upon the spreading scarlet.

"That will do it," says the tattooist, and wipes off the surplus paint with a rag wrung out in disinfectant. The young man inspects the design critically, and nods. A thick smear of vaseline and a piece of waxed paper, and the shirt sleeve can then be pulled down. A note changes hands, and the young seaman departs.

"That's the best part of it," says the tattooist, as he pockets the note.

Apprenticeship in the Navy

"Does it hurt?" we ask again, this time confident of an answer.

"Not much," says the artist, pushing back the shade he wears while working. "No worse than pricking your finger. See this." He reaches for one of the electric needles, and shows us the five tiny points darting adder-like in and out. "Now when I first learnt the job Lyou had to do it this way." He picks up

a hand needle, and demonstrates its slow pricking on the palm of his hand.

"When did you first start?"

"When I was a lad in the Royal Navy, before the last war. Sailors, of course, are the most tattooed people in the world, and in every ship you'll find one or two amateur tattooers. Well, I was a rather good hand at sketching, so I used to do the designs for my cobbers when they wanted to do any tattooing. And then I thought, why shouldn't I learn to do it myself? And I did."

"And do you still do your own designs?"

"Yes, every one of them," he replied, proudly. "I get ideas from all over the place. Look at this." He held up a Pop-Eye, a Snow-White. "Tattooing's one of the oldest things there is, and yet it keeps up-to-date. It's made great strides in the 25 years since the last

To-day's Most Popular Designs

"What are the most popular designs nowadays? Has the demand changed much in the last 25 years?"

"Not so very much. A scroll or heart with a girl's name in it is still the most popular. Yes, most of my work's with names, either putting them on or taking them off. And then military or naval symbols are as popular as ever. That's the one the allied servicemen like best." He indicated a dagger plunged upright in a bleeding heart with a scroll round bearing the legend "Better Death Than Dishonour," and priced modestly at 10/6. "A lot of them who've just crossed the equator for the first time like something to do with that, such as having a pig on one foot and a rooster on the

(Continued on next page)

Finishing Touches

(By WHIM-WHAM)

[The allocation of imports of silverplated coffin furniture from the United Kingdom and Australia during the sev-enth period has been increased ... inclusive of any licences already granted for nickel-plated coffin furniture imports, licences will be granted for imports of nickel-plated fittings, etc.—Newspaper

I FACE the Future undismayed My heavy Dumps are dissipated,
Ah, never was official News
More joyously appreciated
Than This, which reassures me that
My Coffin-handles shall be plated!

OH, I'd be more than mortified It, when they put me under Grass,
Friends who followed and the Rest Who turned to watch my Funeral

pass
Should see, instead of Silver's Gleam,
The vulgar Wink of common Brass;

OR, if instead of Nickel's Sheen, Coarse iron Castings met their View-

View--Such too funereal Furnishings
Would doubly grieve my Mourners,

Expect me to parade that Day
In glittering Fitments, brave and
new!

WHEN I was born no Silver Spoon

Was in my Mouth, and Fortune gave
No great Capacity to win
That precious Metal, or to save;
But given Luck, I yet may go
Electro-plated to my Grave.