

for licking the youngsters into suitable shape for a harsh world, have undergone a deceptive transformation. They are no longer improvised and unthinking; they have been verbalised and polished until they shine with rationale and with lofty intention. Whereas, in England, the kind of educated middle-class people who are articulate about child rearing, usually entertain liberal ideas on the subject, here the reverse is true. The arbitrariness and the unambiguously black and white regulations of the proletarian household are dishd up by the pundits as a character-building discipline. It is no accident that the Truby King system of mothercraft captured the field here—it wildly over-simplifies the relation of mother and baby and governs them in fact by a clock and a book of rules.

ONLY a few years ago, in 1954, the Government actually gave its seal to the over-emphasis on discipline by the extraordinary step, costing £12,800, of circularising every household in the land with the opinions of the Mazengarb committee on juvenile sexual delinquency. To me, the alarmist nature of this report and its naive preoccupation with poor discipline as a cause of precocious sexual activity, is more disquieting than the social problems to which it refers. Compared to elsewhere, these problems are not really very grave here, but the effect of the pronouncements in the report itself are most unhealthy. Children always have experimented with sex and doubtless always will, and parents should know this. Now the occasional parent who finds out, believes he is bringing up a milk-bar cowboy and emotionally is thrown quite out of balance.

And here I can come back to the other peculiarity I remarked on earlier—the New Zealander's pet notions about the young. He nurses a fantasy—I can only call it a fantasy since I am at a loss to unearth any substance in it—that children are no longer controlled or instructed in the classroom as they once were in his day, that youth is pampered, delinquent and licentious to a degree unknown in the past, and that while he himself is injured to all this, it must strike the newcomer with appalling force. This view is, I sometimes imagine, a national superstition, since I hear it from the earnest student just out of school as well as the newspaper editor. And yet there is a flagrant discrepancy between what one hears and what one sees—the politeness of children, the seriousness of students, the rigorouslyness of authority in the classroom.

Now, how is this mass delusion to be explained? The clue, I think, is the note of jealousy in these complaints about the laxity and pleasure seeking of the rising generation—"It's not what I was allowed." "We could never get off with that." "They don't have to work at all at school now." I suspect the young are being condemned for what their parents had every urge to do—to throw off the traces and break away. There is a pervading fear of this urge in the children even though they are only slightly less restrained now than they once were.

Why does the New Zealand parent have an excessive anxiety that his children will break away morally and

Auckland Letter

TWO YOUNG MEN

THE question whether we do or do not export our best brains, and whether we can afford to go on doing it, was very much in my mind during that fuss over Alan Ingham's sculpture for the Takapuna Library. Reading rather sombrely and gloomily that other fuss about New Zealand's continued loss of nuclear scientists, I reflected that they at least are likely to hit the headlines more persistently than mere poets, painters, sculptors or writers. For when it's a question of scientific research which ends in more efficient destruction we see (as in Britain during the last war) that money for such a cause blooms miraculously just where, "They" told us, there was none available. So, probably, we shall manage to raise the hoot for the necessary nuclear brains (though I'm told that it's not brains so much as safe Yes-men that the authorities are after), while continuing to lose a great many people with artistic gifts and artistic integrity.

However, as Oliver Edwards said, cheerfulness is always breaking in: and I was cheered last week at the opening of Keith Patterson's one-man show at the Society of Arts new rooms in Eden Crescent. For here is a young New Zealand painter who went away for six years, and has now come back, we hope, to settle in his own country: and here is the harvest of his years in Spain and Majorca to be seen in his native Auckland.

Most of the 40 paintings were done, he told me, in the last few months of his stay abroad. This interested me, because it contrasted sharply with a writer's method. Many writers find they write best from notes on the spot, red-hot with the excitement of new people, new countries, new ideas. But many a painter has to wait patiently until acclimatisation has set in, and sometimes longer still. For one thing, he almost always has to get used to the light of a new country (though Majorca, apparently, with its sea-lighted skies, is very much like the Waitemata in this respect), before he even begins to absorb its new colours. Then, and only then, can he paint.

Now I do have to take myself by the scruff of the neck and make myself

an extreme alertness to quell such moves? Isn't it because he himself or his father or grandfather literally broke away from his forebears in England? In fact, if there were no dangerously strong drive to break away in the inheritance of every New Zealand family, none of us would be here.

NOW such a heritage is just as well to be found in every American family, and we may wonder why it is treated so very differently there. If we are to believe Geoffrey Gorer, the model American child is the very one who succeeds in breaking away and in leaving his father a great distance behind him socially and economically. Father, in the American family, is a person to be surpassed, not a person to be emulated. As a consequence, youth and newness are the favourite American virtues, and authority and tradition are the least valued. And so,

look at modern painting; and this show was no exception. Criticism is quite beyond me, for I don't know, and never shall know, enough about painting generally to presume so far. (Not that this sober thought ever restrains the multitude, when roused by a vividly new artist: witness the flood of comment in Auckland from all and sundry over the Henry Moore exhibition.) All I am going to say is that it was refreshing, after five and a half years away from Europe, to stroll once again round well-appointed rooms hung with paintings entirely new to me, and feel once again the excitement which a sheer explosion of personality produces, whether in paint, print, marble, or any other material. No receptive person, however ignorant, could doubt that here, in Keith Patterson's work, is a most individual touch. Many of the paintings I did not like, one or two even made me bristle with dislike: but three, at least, I would have bought on the spot if suddenly blessed with cash—and not a single one bored me.

If this can happen every now and then in Auckland, I for one can do without any further live stimulus from Old Europe. But the only way to ensure its happening is to encourage those



KEITH PATTERSON

while Americans have become unlike Europeans, New Zealanders have scarcely changed, possessing little, as yet, in the way of a vocabulary, songs, and culture of their own, and this implies fewer deep roots in the territory of these islands than they themselves realise, so I imagine.

The problem I am dissecting out is why the immigrant American accepted that his children must grow up foreign both to him and to the old country he came from himself, and why the immigrant New Zealander could not accept it—why, on the contrary, he tried to make an England or Scotland here and to discourage deviation in his children.

Somewhere, an answer would reveal fundamental New Zealand attitudes to the family. Several possibilities spring to my mind . . . but you have suffered enough of my opinions and assertions. I must leave you to supply a solution of your own.

who make it happen. We, the public, surely owe something to men who risk a good deal to go overseas, and then return bringing their sheaves with them. We owe them at least the courtesy of a careful hearing, if they are writers, and an equally thoughtful look, if they practise the visual arts. Incidentally, it has always struck me as a trifle odd that we tend to make more fuss over the artist who goes overseas on a Government bursary or some such thing, while being less generous to those who have done the trip under their own steam. Is it because there is a condescending streak in even the best of us, and we feel flattered at having had a hand in the first kind of adventure, while being affronted that we have had none in the second?

Anyhow, here is a New Zealander home again: here are his paintings. What shall we do about it? Go and see them, of course, if we can: don't despair of seeing them, if we live in another centre. What, for instance, is happening among the artists of Dunedin? Could they not send us something, in exchange for this Patterson show, which would be as new to them? Is it not, in any case, worth trying?

THE dreadfully sudden death of Guy

Young, at the age of 37, must have shocked a great many people in Auckland and elsewhere. He was a very gentle, sensitive and humorous person whose host of friends all over New Zealand, in Mexico, the States, and Canada will miss him sorely. Like many men who have been dogged by wretched health for most of their lives, he was an incomparable observer, watching with compassion, and a great deal of quiet fun, the oddities, vagaries, and rare beauties of the humans he met in a wandering life. I met him first on the other side of a microphone, in Christchurch, where we did a couple of broadcasts together with that menacing little hexagon between us. Doing a radio talk with someone you have never laid eyes on before can be something of a trial: and this was fuller of hazards than most. For he had had one of his bad asthmatic nights, and was not sure whether his voice would stay the course. I was therefore harassed throughout by the fear that if the worst happened I should have to carry on, with the knowledge that it was Guy Young on D. H. Lawrence, and not Sarah Campion putting questions, that the listeners wanted. However, with skilful husbandry, his vocal cords held; and the result was as usual when Guy broadcast: there was the modest though unmistakably emphatic, impact of a personality.

Though he was an easy broadcaster, in the sense that he enjoyed doing it, and it certainly seemed to come most naturally to him, I doubt whether he was an easy writer. He was too much of a perfectionist, and he knew his time was short. And, like all writers, I think he longed to leave behind him something more permanent than journalism. This was a feeling Katherine Mansfield knew all too well for comfort: both of them could have echoed Marvell:

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near.
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.

He might have lived longer if he had been less generous with his gifts. But his own way was best: he will be remembered as a man who lived ardently.

—Sarah Campion