

and **Uffizi** collections of Florence, and the marvels of the Vatican and great collections of Roman nobles, besides the German and other continental galleries. Well indeed may the critic-battered New Zealand student say, "Remember what I lack!" Yet New Zealand, too, let it not be forgotten, has its advantages. Those who can enjoy the glories of art on the walls of the Trafalgar Square gallery do not open their eyes daily on the glorious vista of the dancing waters of the Waitaitara, and cannot at a moderate expenditure, as we can, enjoy the beauties of our matchless forests and our incomparable gorges, or the sublimities of our mountain scenery. Wherefore we can go forward with confidence, and also, too, with a quickening of the pulses, at our possibilities, at the life which can, which may, which must (for we must make it so), lie before the Auckland Society of Arts and kindred societies of the South.

**A FIRST GLIMPSE ROUND**

With an apology for the foregoing prising, one may now take a first glimpse round at the pictures, and after the casual sweep of the eyes has given a foretaste of the feast of colour awaiting, and revealed the fact that the number of large, or, as they are sometimes quaintly termed, "important," canvases is greater than usual, attention will at once be gripped by the very much greater proportion than of yore which falls to genre, figure studies, and to portraits of merit. Land and sea scenes, as they always must in New Zealand, and as is natural and desirable they should still occupy the mass and majority of space on the walls in both water-colour and in oil, but the portraits are unquestionably a feature of the Year. The very great increase in the number of works submitted to the judging committee is, of course, a subject for congratulation. Many have, however, to be hung outside, and while it is no doubt a burden grievous to be borne to be rejected, yet that way improvement lies. No doubt, some leniency must naturally be exhibited, but that it is in the best interests of all that the standard should be high is unquestionable. Remember, O hot-headed and tumultuously indignant aspirant at the altars of Art, that you see your picture through wrong spectacles. If you have the courage, place it away for, say, five years, then look at it again, and if you have studied and profited by rejection, you will thank the gods who guard reception committees from the folly of kindly weakness, and say, "How on earth did I ever want to exhibit that!" To return, however, to our portraits. To those, as to other pictures in detail, we shall have to return later, but it may be said that Mr Goldie's "Portrait of a Lady" (Mrs Street, of Parnell) is, so far as technical ability is concerned, one of the finest exhibitions of skill this gifted artist has yet given us, and which, while lacking the same popular interest, may yet rank as high, if not even higher, than the Maori studies by the same painter, one or other of which will assuredly and deservedly be selected by the public as "the picture of the year." Mr Goldie has put in a strenuous and tremendously energetic year, and shows many pictures, to which we shall refer

again, but Auckland and the Society may certainly be congratulated on an artist who places in amongst other such notable works as his "Puffin" and the "Study of a Laughing Maori." That his last approach, if it does not absolutely attain, genius, who will deny? It is magnetic, captivating, irresistible; one positively must laugh too—and all the artist knows in technique here finds its fullest and most successful scope. More popular pictures of Maori life Mr Goldie has probably painted—exhibits, indeed, in this exhibition—but nothing finer in its way. And here for a time we must leave Mr Goldie, whose work will require much attention.

In artistic importance, and such merits as will appeal more strongly to the professional than the lay mind, is the comparatively small but exceedingly clever oil by a Southern contributor, Miss D. L. Richmond, "La Place de Geseulin" (probably in a Brittany town). It is an autumn scene in a square of that name, and the figures of some children play round the statue of the mighty Bertrand, most famous of French knights of chivalry. A helmeted Chasseur and his sweetheart are looking at the statue, while, under the warm-tinted autumn-leaved trees, works some mothers or nursemaids, the background being the houses of the square, in lighting, in composition, and in assurance, decision, and ease of style, the picture is quite admirable, and one on which the spectator may spend more than passing interest and remark.

Coming back to local artists, it is pleasant to note that unquestionably one of the most successful and most ambitious oils of the year is by Mr. Frank Wright. "A Dusty Day" is probably the best oil painting we have had from this faithful exhibitor and tried friend of the society, who usually prefers the water medium for his favourite subjects. The picture is an example of the educative and suggestive value of first-class works purchased from the galleries of the Old Country, for it is certain that Mr. Wright has felt the influence of Mr. Arnsby Brown's fine painting in the Mackelvie collection, and has very successfully attempted something in the same style himself. Not that Mr. Wright has copied Mr. Brown's picture or his idea in the slightest degree; but just as one writer will influence and improve the style of another, so has Mr. Wright come under the spell of the Home artist. The composition of the picture is happy, and it displays the true artist's faculty for seizing on a beautiful "bit," and converting it into a picture, where the average individual would have seen nothing out of the common. It shows a country road, probably in the Waikato; there is a sunny sky, and the trees (poplars, one imagines) are in their freshest green. Some cattle, happily placed, are wandering down the sunlit road, kicking up the dust, an effect extremely difficult to achieve, and an overcoming which Mr. Wright may be congratulated. In the background are the distant ranges. The picture is a beautiful one, and will be admired. To Mr. Wright's several beautiful water colours we shall refer later.

Mr. E. M. Payton sends a number of his admirable water colour pictures of charming New Zealand scenery. To

these attention must be devoted in future articles, but it may be remarked now that a delightful bend on the Tokaunu river, and catalogued under that name, and a brilliant little gem of some pohutukawas in full bloom on the lake beach, one imagines, are not amongst the least attractive.

Mr. Steele's portrait of Mrs. Euden is a most striking likeness of that lady, but does not in some ways reach the standard at one time set by an artist who in the past gave us such pictures as "The Story of a Saddle" and "The Last Stand of Starlight," and many others.

There are notable exhibits by Mr. Walter Wright, Mr. T. L. Drummond, Mr. Trenwith, and several other well-known local and Southern exhibitors, and also by some newcomers, notably Mr. Wallace and Miss Hutton, which should in justice be referred to in this preliminary article, but the limits of space have already been over-stopped, and remarks on works of these must be left to future issues.

Mr. Walter Wright's most notable effort this year is his effective and characteristic canvas, "On the Waipa" (No. 27). The scene depicted is a common one on the beautiful river named, as also on the Waikato. Two Maori canoes in charge of the women folk of the community have been on a fern gathering expedition, and are leisurely retracing across the river, the occupants of the canoes chatting as they paddle across the stream. It is summer time, and the fact that it is a blazingly hot day is well indicated by the peculiar intense blue of the sky, relieved by two tiny fleecy clouds of extreme white—the kind peculiar to the warm days of high summer tide, and that oily placidity of water which is seldom observed, save under conditions of extreme heat. An artist who positively revels in brilliant colouring, Mr. Walter Wright, has on this occasion put what must have been for him a severe restraint on himself, for, though the subject lends itself to positive exuberance in this matter, Mr. Wright is seen in far less flamboyant mood than usual. The sky is brilliantly blue, but the reflected colouring of the river is far more subdued than is usual with Mr. Wright; and one just wonders if the picture would have been even happier painted in the artist's more natural or, to put it differently, best known style. However, this may be, and it is a question the artist himself could undoubtedly upon, the result, as it is, is quite excellent, and Mr. Wright has furnished another typically New Zealand picture, which is quite up to previous standards, though it does not, perhaps, surpass the happiest of his former efforts.

Mr. T. L. Drummond is again an exhibitor but has almost relinquished his favourite subject of sea, ships, and blue boulders for inland subjects. The more successful of these is, perhaps, the sunset scene on the Waigani River, which is an attractive little subject pleasantly handled. It displays no great advance on previous work by the same artist, but it is free from "slackness," and while it will not, perhaps, notably enhance Mr. Drummond's reputation, it will at least not detract from it.

No. 78.—The Approaching Thunderstorm.—In this Mr. Drummond is rather less successful, and execution may, we think, be taken to the handling of the sky, with its vivid blue, overtopping a lower strata of what appears to be the thunderstorm clouds of extraordinary turquoise hue. Either colouring alone would have been more convincing, but in conjunction they are, even if as seen (a point on which the artist can always elaborate) not altogether felicitous even if legitimate in a picture.

Miss Hodgkins, of Dunedin, is well represented by pictures which will certainly enhance her reputation as a water-colour artist. No. 185, "A Dutch Housewife," a somewhat impressionistic study of an old peasant poling a metal jar, is probably the best as it is certainly the most ambitious of the works submitted by this talented artist. The painting is broadly done, and the effects are produced with boldness and certainty of touch and brush work, which shows that Miss Hodgkins is fairly, and legitimately, confident of her mastery of the medium. No. 180, "Her First Market," is a nice piece of composition, pleasantly and effectively handled, and suggestive of humour without, while 233 "The Oude Delft," is notable for its brilliant colouring, which would make it a delightful companion in any room.

The pastels of Miss Hutton are really notable achievements for a young artist, the one hung in the main gallery (No.

230) being by far the better, by giving an amount of delicacy in colouring and clever "dodge work" almost astonishing in so recent an exhibition. The lighting on the face, from beneath, is obviously artificial, but is well treated, and the only improvement one can suggest is the modification of the extreme high light on the tip of the nose. It gives a com-



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