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District Land and Survey Office, Auckland, 1st May, 1906.

It is hereby notified that 31,000 acres in the Opotiki County, in areas ranging from 317 acres to 2000 acres, and situated from 10 to 32 miles from Opotiki Township will be opened for application under the optional system of the Land Act, 1906, Auckland and Opotiki on the 18th June, 1906. Posters giving full particulars will be available shortly, and copies can be had on application at this office.

JAMES MACKENZIE,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS.
PRINCE OF WALES' BIRTHDAY.
JUNE, 1906.

Holiday Excursion Tickets will be issued from any station to any station on the Auckland section from FRIDAY, 1st June, to MONDAY, 4th June, and from any station to Auckland, from FRIDAY, 8th June, to SATURDAY, 9th June, all available for return up to and including MONDAY, 26th June.

RACES AT ELLERSLIE.
2nd, 4th, and 9th JUNE.

Trains will leave Auckland for Ellerslie Racecourse at 10.50, 11.10, 11.35, 11.50 a.m., 12.10 p.m., 1.10 p.m., and 2.10 p.m., and a Special Train will leave Auckland for Mercer at 6.35 p.m., arriving Mercer 9.30 p.m. BY ORDER.

NOTICE TO MAKE RETURNS OF INCOME UNDER "THE LAND AND INCOME ASSESSMENT ACT, 1906"

Land and Income Tax Department, Wellington, 12th May, 1906.

Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of the above Act, and the Regulations made thereunder, every person and company within the meaning of the said Act, having derived income during the year ending 31st March, 1906, from any source or by any means which is made the subject of taxation under the said Act, is hereby required to duly make and furnish to me, in the prescribed form, returns of such income on or before the 1st June, 1906.

And, further, notice is hereby given that such returns shall in all cases be delivered at or forwarded to the office of the Commissioner of Taxes, in the Government Buildings, at Wellington.

P. HEYES,
Commissioner of Taxes.

NOTE.—Persons who have not received forms of return from this office may obtain them at any Postal Money Order Office.

SPECIAL NOTE.—Any person failing to furnish a return at the prescribed time is liable to a penalty of not less than £2 nor more than £100.

BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

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Reserve Fund	£1,425,000
Reserve Liability of Proprietors	£2,000,000
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J. RUSSELL FRANCIS,
General Manager.



SOME LONDON STATUES.

SCULPTURE has always been the Cinderella of the Arts in England, and its best specimens (not forgetting the many fine works in St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey) are to be seen in the galleries of the great and rich, writes Charles H. Heydemann.

The great evil from which London suffers, as regards open-air statuary, is the smoky condition of the atmosphere. Of course it is difficult to get anything to harmonise with the peculiar blackness of London, but why not follow the example of ancient Rome, which had at one time more than 8000 statues in the open, all of them gilt?

The statue of Queen Elizabeth, at the side entrance to St. Dunstons-in-the-West, is an unobtrusive figure tucked away at the eastern end of the church. This effigy of hers in ruffe and farthingale, so well displayed in the famous "rainbow" portrait by Zuccheri, in Hatfield House, is more an interesting relic, having survived the great fire of London, when it adorned the front of Ludgate (together with the statues of King Lud and his two sons) than a striking representation of the masterful woman who ruled England at the most glorious period of her history.

Wandering furthest west, the first thing that strikes the eye in Trafalgar Square is the Nelson column. The statue of Nelson is 17 feet high, but perched up as it is on a granite column 145 feet above the spectator, it is difficult to decide upon the artistic value of this work of Baily's, who, by the way, was a pupil of Plaxman's. As far as anybody at the base of the statue is concerned, it might be a statue of England's enemy, Napoleon himself, to judge by the legendary swallowtail coat and cocked hat, which would look just as much in place on top of the Vendome column, in Paris, as they do here. The only distinctive details are the hanging sleeveless arm and the coil of ship's rope against which Nelson is leaning.

In front of the Nelson column, facing towards Whitehall, the place of his execution, stands the equestrian statue of Charles I. Modelled by Robert Leaneur, a pupil of John of Bologna, it was taken down by the Revolutionary Parliament, and ordered to be broken up. But the brazier to whom it was hounded buried it underground, intact, driving meanwhile a bridle trade in knives and forks with bronze handles, ostensibly made out of the obnoxious statue. Then when Charles II. and the Royalists were again in power and fashion, the bronze statue came forth to light, and was set up in 1674 here, where his murderers had perished. What a degradation this statue, with its little square-wizened figure, crouching on the enormous horse, is to the memory of our Royal Charles, who, whatever may have been his faults, was yet pre-eminent by his stately reserve, personal dignity and decency of manners, in such striking contrast to the gable and indecorum of his father. It was a poetical, happy idea to place the King gazing at Whitehall, the place of his downfall, but then his whole attitude should have expressed the feeling, "And yet, in spite of all, I am the King." Only Vandyke has given us the real picture of the man whose proud motto was "Nulla vestigia retrorsum."

Of Hampden, another of the leading figures which emerges from those troublous times, there is a statue in St. Stephen's Hall, forming one of twelve ranged along both sides of the hall, who rose to eminence by their eloquence and ability. Mr. Philip Smith, of the House of Commons, informs me, that "it is by J. H. Foley; it does not bear the date, but I should think it was executed somewhere in the sixties. It is perhaps noteworthy that these statues stand just in the hall upon the actual site of which stood the House of Commons before the fire, and within the walls of which the real statesmen thundered

forth their eloquence. Hampden's statue stands just at the back of where formerly stood the Speaker's chair, and the table from which Cromwell ordered the huddle to be removed."

The work of our one notable sculptor (born in Amsterdam), Grinling Gibbons, is the well-known statue of James II., now behind the New Admiralty, in St. James' Park. It was set up in 1686, just two years before his abdication, and is of bronze, representing the King dressed in a Roman toga. It has been claimed for this statue that it is the only one in the Metropolis that will bear a rigid inspection as a work of art. It may be taken as a sign of the moderation of the Revolution of 1688, that, after the accession of William of Orange, the statue was still left standing.

William III.'s statue stands in the centre of St. James' Square, where formerly was a large oval basin of water. John Tibbs tells us that a pedestal for a statue was erected in the centre of the square in 1732, but the statue, cast in brass by the younger Bacon, was not set up till 1808, the bequest in 1724 for the cost having been forgotten until the money was found in the lists of unclaimed dividends. The external appearance of William is almost as well known to us as to his own captains and counsellors. His name calls up at once before us "a slender and feeble frame, a lofty and ample forehead, a nose curved like the beak of an eagle, an eye rivalling that of an eagle in brightness and keenness, a thoughtful and somewhat sullen brow, a firm and somewhat peevish mouth, cheeks pale, thin, and deeply furrowed by sickness and care." Now he rides in solitude such as would have pleased even his secluded tastes, behind the railings in St. James' Square.

THE SACRED CENTRE OF HINDUISM.

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grims straight from the railway. They were more like a crowd of bean-feasters on an English bank holiday than a band of devotees seriously sucking deliverance from future reincarnations and the early attainment of Nirvana by an act of great piety in the present life. They were welcomed with shouts, and as they landed at the base of the great flight of steps of Kidar (that the women preened themselves and readjusted their silk draperies, while a holiday air pervaded the crowd.

All the primitive acts of the Hindus' day were in progress. Many of those less richly endowed with this world's goods were combining their ceremonial ablutions with the washing of their only outfit of clothing, and the red, which is so universally popular a shade in India, tinged the water like the blood of a living sacrifice. Under the spreading umbrellas, and on the stone platforms, groups were making their frugal morning meal of rice. Barbers were busily plying their trade, while the victims followed the progress of operations with the aid of a scrap of ill-reflecting mirror. Shaving as carried on without any attempt at lathering, while all parties squatted on their haunches, looked an unsatisfactory and painful ordeal; but what can be expected at a farthing or halfpenny?—I forget whether these outdoor consorial artists charge one or two pice. The main burning ghat was busy this particular morning. Corpses were plentifully lying around in the most casual manner in their covering of white linen, rising and falling on the river's margin as they underwent their final bath of purification, or in process of being built into wooden pyres by natives who casually dumped the wood on the unprotesting bodies. There are varieties in cremation, and they were to be seen here. The poor man whose relatives can only afford three rupees' worth of wood gets barely charred, but as the essentials are the burning of the scents it suffices, and the vulture, as the corpse floats down the stream, accomplish the rest. The rich man, however, with his ten rupees' (13/4) worth of wood, gets pretty completely incinerated, and there is little left but ashes to be dissipated by the broad river. The worst unfortunate in the pauper, for whose funeral the State provides three rupees, a considerable percentage of which remains as ghusari, or commission, in the various hands through which it passes before the wood-seller provides the necessary fuel. Strolling along the ghats one gets a bel-

ter view also of the queer contortions into which Scindia ghat was thrown by the subsidence of the huge building that the Maharaja Scindia started in 1820 with quite inadequate foundations. It promised to be the most beautiful structure on the river, but all that remains in the massive stone piers which in their subsidence have thrown at all angles the buildings on the steps immediately below in a manner that brings into disrepute the work of the most conscientious of cameras, as no one will looking at snapshots of the place, believe but that the kodak that took them was on a disgraceful spree at the time. Close by is Panch Ganga ghat, one of the five most sacred on the river. The four streams that devout Hindus believe here join the Ganges are Dhurma Naia (river of Virtue), Dhutapappa (dewarer of sin), Kirtumudi (brook of sun's rays), and the Sarawasti (spouse of Brahma). Here even the gods are supposed to find merit in bathing in the brown waters. But the most interesting spot of the three miles of river front is perhaps Manikaranika ghat. On the piers extending from the base of its stairs sit devotees who for hours daily go through the repetition of prayers and charms, interspersed with posturings and bathings. At its head is the sacred kund, or tank, in which the liar, the thief, the murderer, the adulterer may wash and be cleansed from all sin, although the intrusion of the purest Christian would utterly defile its sanctity. It is the heart of Hinduism. Here all classes mingle, and every shade of pilgrim comes, and the familiar which inevitably strikes the ear, "Bakhsesh give here, sir; one rupee—eight annas—four annas. I am priest; I make prayer for you." It is the very centre of Brahmia chicanery, where the poor pilgrim is robbed by one who, under an ostensible sacred office, is a combination of beggar, bully and tout, the lines of greed deep marked on his fat features. I cannot hope to convey the vivid impression of the combination of serious and devout attention to the round of prescribed acts of purification side by side with the hollow mockery of the many who take the pilgrimage as a glorious holiday and the avareicious and skilled effort of the Brahmin to turn both alike to his pecuniary advantage, that a stroll along these remarkable stairs, with their backing of great buildings, must leave on even the most superficially observant and casual tourist, Benares is filthy, the centre of a religion whose ideals are low and practices revolting, but its past history is remarkable, its present is unique, and its future an enigma of unrivalled interest.

AUCKLAND SOCIETY OF ARTS EXHIBITION.

A FEW PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

It would obviously be both easier and more pleasant to take "the primrose way," and to declare, as is usual at the opening ceremony, that the present exhibition of the Auckland Society of Arts equals, even if it does not surpass, the best of its predecessors. Unfortunately, it is impossible to truthfully congratulate the society in this fashion, for though there have unquestionably been one or two more mediocre and less interesting exhibitions, it is impossible to deny that there have been others which immeasurably outclass that of the present year, which, judged as a whole, is somewhat disappointing and below the average of what we had come to expect now that the society possesses its own gallery, and after the somewhat encouraging fresh start made last year.

It is not that there are not some very beautiful pictures, nor is it that there are many which must be written down bad. There is a small percentage of both oil and water colour which any gallery in the world might honour at their annual exhibitions, and the weeding out of atrocities on the eyesight has been thorough, but mediocrity is the keynote. There is not that advance which one might reasonably hope for. No old exhibitor has risen so far above his or her form as to perceptibly raise the general fitness, and no young painter has flashed into the art triumphant to startle us with the brilliance of originality and genius. It is not reasonable to expect miracles, but it is surely a matter for serious consideration that the exhibitions of some years ago were better than that of this year, both in quality, and if one mistakes not, in quantity also. Auckland possesses its handsomely endowed Blain School of