

Arts and Crafts.

Printing in China.

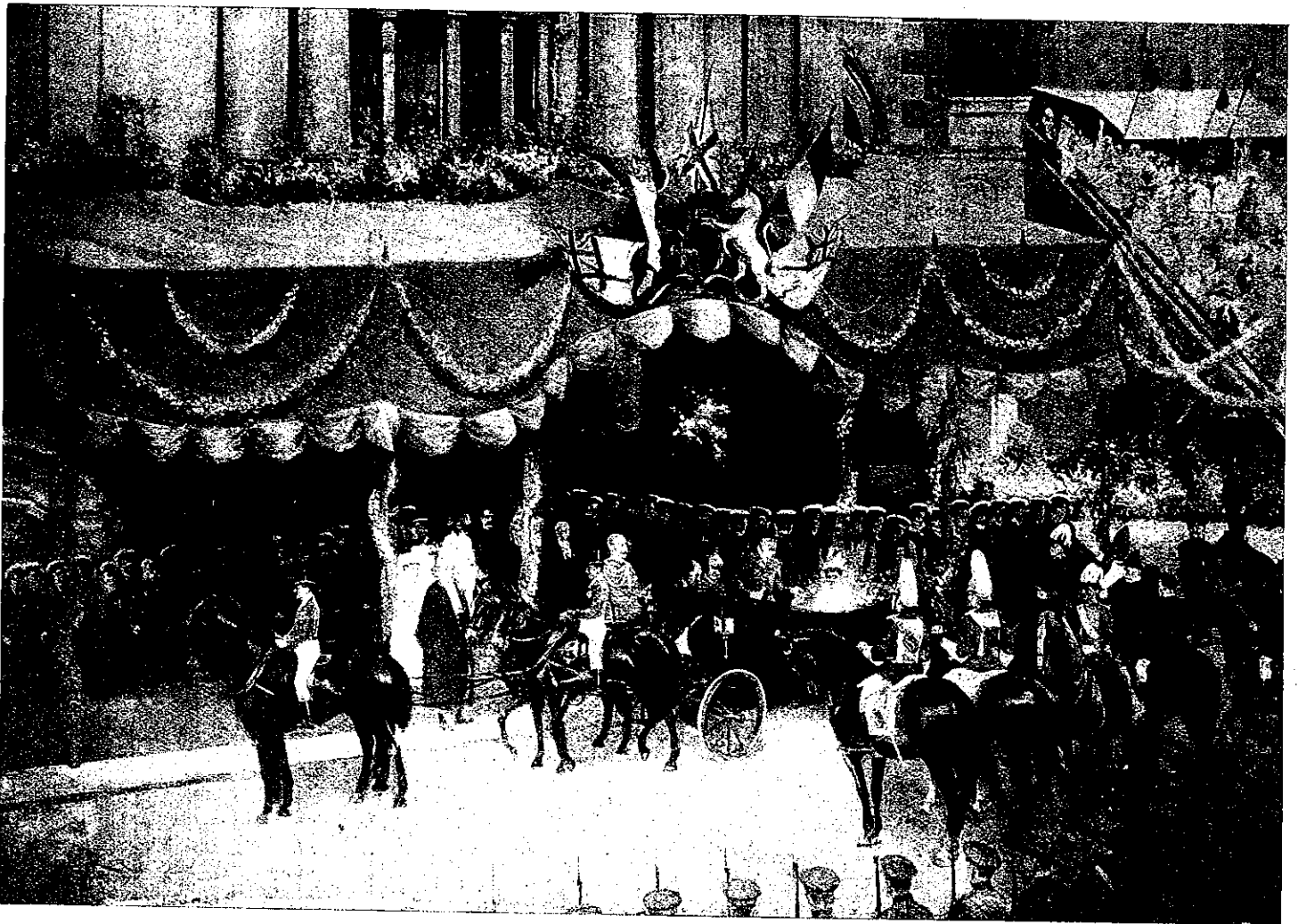
That the art of printing, first used in China, has not reached there the enormous vogue that it enjoys in Western lands is doubtless due to the great number of characters required. The Chinese printer, however, does not ordinarily use the 41,000 characters of Kang Hsi's dictionary; he finds that for practical purposes a mere 7,000 will do. Deputy Consul-General John K. Davis, of Shanghai, writing recently in "Daily Consular and

deposit of copper thick enough to be polished off and fixed in a brass holder. . . . Characters made by this means possess more of that calligraphic excellence so dear to the Chinese than do those cast in matrices cut by steel punches.

"Among the firms in Shanghai manufacturing type and matrices may be mentioned the Presbyterian Mission Press (American), the Commercial Press (Chinese), and the Methodist Publishing House (American). It is stated that the type in the cheaper fonts, such as are

strong conservatism, the peculiar charm and artistic softness of the pages printed from blocks, which the modern books from metal presses do not have, and the fact that the new-style volumes lack that peculiar odour imparted in the older method by the lampblack vegetable oil ink with which they are printed, an odour which, although extremely disagreeable to Occidental nostrils, is inseparably associated in the Chinese mind with good literature.

"Photolithography is also being used to



KING EDWARD VII. REVIEWING VETERANS OF THE CRIMEAN AND INDIAN MUTINY AT BRISTOL, 1909.
Painted for the Veterans' Institute by G. E. Butler.

Trade Reports" (Washington) tells us that with a font of this size the Chinese printer, in the course of setting up a book, will frequently find that he lacks a dozen or so unusual characters, a difficulty which he readily meets by having the missing symbols hand-cut on blank-type by skilled engravers, who, thanks to the old wood-block system, are to be found in practically every town in China. We read further:—

"It has been found by the Shanghai type-founders that the electrotype process is the most successful for the manufacture of matrices. By this method the character is first cut in some suitable wood as a mould, which is placed in a depositing trough containing copper solution, and left for several days until there is a

deposit of copper thick enough to be polished off and fixed in a brass holder. . . . Characters made by this means possess more of that calligraphic excellence so dear to the Chinese than do those cast in matrices cut by steel punches.

"Although practically all Chinese newspapers and books on modern topics are now printed from moveable metal type, books pertaining to old China, such as the Confucian classics and their commentaries, are still produced by the time-honoured method of printing from wooden blocks. Among the reasons why the Chinese prefers his books of this nature printed in the old way are his naturally

some extent for the reproduction at moderate cost of rare and hitherto almost unprocurable Chinese works. This process finds favour chiefly for the reason that it so perfectly reproduces the characters beautifully written by famous Chinese literati of former days as to give each volume that peculiar individuality prized by the native scholar."

Of twelve hundred odd art exhibits now on view at the Royal Albert Hall in connection with the London Salon, only two have any direct New Zealand interest. These are pictures sent in by Mr. G. E. Butler, who now lives at Bristol, but who really belongs to Wellington. Both are figure studies, and have come in for considerable praise.