Part 3 1920 - 1929

Chapter 16

An Overview of the 1930s

In the 1910s the critical precepts of studio pottery were defined, the 1920s witnessed the emergence of studio pottery as a contemporary discipline and the 1930s was the decade of reorientation and maturation. Studio potters had managed to coexist as the movement coalesced but, as Leach's *A Potter's Outlook* revealed, tensions about the direction of studio pottery appeared by the late 1920s. A shared medium and title were not enough to unite the competing ambitions of this small group that included Staite Murray with his avant-garde aspirations, Cardew's neo-vernacular revival, Parnell's figurative porcelain and Leach's ideas of studio manufacture. During the 1930s studio pottery underwent a major realignment and by the end of the decade this group had polarised as a result of growing conflicts, the ebb and flow of individual careers and because of changes taking place in English art due to the spread of the Modern Movement. Of the original major figures, Reginald Wells was no longer exhibiting, Staite Murray had dissociated himself from studio pottery in pursuit of fine art and his membership of the Seven and Five Society and Bernard Leach had become entrepreneurial in his views on managing the production of pottery. Michael Cardew, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie and Nora Braden confirmed the promise of their early careers and were fully acknowledged by the press while the revival of figurative modelling collapsed. Marginalised individuals such as Dora Lunn and W. B. Dalton remained on the periphery of studio pottery as

a new generation of younger potters such as Sam Haile and Margaret Rey appeared towards the end of the decade. In 1930, studio pottery was no longer an emerging discipline enjoying the benefits of promise but was open to full scrutiny. Although still in its infancy, it had significantly changed during the first ten years but its place within English art and craft was still unresolved.

A vacuum appeared in the critical positioning of studio pottery after its surrogate critics Fry and Read lost interest in individually made pottery. A new generation of curatorial writers such as W. B. Honey and Arthur Lane emerged, but they were cautious and non-committal in comparison to the active role Rackham had taken in the first years of the 1920s. Staite Murray had ceased to write on pottery in the 1930s. The full weight of Leach's ideas about individual and serial production started to emerge through his writing, supported by Yanagi and the views of the Mingei movement. W. A. Thorpe continued to write stimulating articles during the first half of the decade, but he was not an innovative theorist like Fry and Read and confined himself to interpreting historical ceramics using their critical theories. The 1930s were also notable for the end of Marriot's interest in studio pottery. As its most enthusiastic critic, this ended a run of over thirty reviews published in *The Times* over an eleven year period. Studio pottery would never again have such a prominent and vociferous supporter.

Part 3 examines critical writing on studio pottery in the 1930s. It follows the previous structure with separate chapters on early Oriental and English

pottery as this writing continued to have a bearing on the interpretation of Chinese and vernacular themes in studio pottery. There was an overlap between vernacular and modern pottery in discussions about English national identity throughout the 1930s, and but Antiquarian writing is discussed separately. The growth of the Modern Movement in England during the decade sharpened debate on the relationship between studio pottery and industry; contemporaneous debate on the issue of Englishness in pottery is included in this chapter. Figurative modelling declined during the 1930s and does not warrant a separate chapter. It is incorporated into the overview, as is discussion of books on studio pottery which increased in number as the movement gained popularity. Studio potters polarised into two camps and individual designers are subsequently discussed in two chapters. The chapter on Staite Murray charts critical writing on his pottery from the peak of his career in 1930 and its subsequent decline. The chapter on Leach includes discussion of his students, Cardew, Pleydell-Bouverie and Braden and the two exhibitions of Tomimoto and Hamada as these potters either exhibited together or shared common interests.

16.1 Figurative Modelling

Although the press continued to cover exhibitions of modelling during the 1930s figurative pottery had a significantly reduced presence in comparison to the previous decade. It had peaked by the mid 1930s after which press reports of exhibitions declined both in quantity and quality. As discussed in Chapter 14, this revivalist genre of studio pottery has presented historians

with difficulties in reconciling it with thrown pottery. One of the first reviews of the decade was in the general section of *Apollo* on the modeller Gwendolene Parnell's two - person Fine Art Society exhibition. Written by the editor Herbert Furst (who wrote the 'Art News and Notes' section) who, like other critics of the 1920s, was charmed by the 'real life' of Parnell's 17th and 18th century inspired figures. With titles such as 'Cupid's Bath' and 'The Shepherdess' Parnell's figurines had a 'period rhythm'[1] as opposed to 'the austere rhythm of pure aesthetics'. This germane phrase sums up the dichotomy between the historicism epitomised by the 'lighter vein of Parnell's modelled figures' and the Formalist writing of most studio pottery criticism. The same issue of *Apollo* included the review 'Adrian Allinson's Pottery Statuettes'.[2] Allinson was, according to Furst, a well known painter from the London Group and his interest in modelling was perhaps indicative of its growth in popularity. According to the reviewer, his glazed stoneware figures and animals were more contemporary and, with their glazes in 'greys, dull blue-greens and browns', did not possess 'period rhythm'.

The critical standing of figurative ceramics continued to be reinforced by Antiquarian articles on historical work such as Rackham's 'Dwight Figures; New Acquisitions at South Kensington'[3] published in *The Burlington* in 1931. Rackham valued this work highly and his comment helps to explain

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[1] Furst, H., 'Sculpture by R. Tait McKenzie, R.C.A., and Miss G. Parnell's Pottery Figures, at the Fine Art Society, *Apollo*, Vol. XII, No. 68, August, 1930, p. 166.
[2] Furst, H., 'Adrian Allinson's Pottery Statuettes', *Apollo*, Vol. XII, No. 68, August, 1930, p. 169.

the regard for Parnell's figures 'As works of art these stoneware figures deserve to be ranked high. They are each original models in clay'.[4] Rackham was careful to distinguish between these and later Staffordshire earthenware figurines which 'were produced for commercial distribution by the gross from moulds and were at the best mechanical duplications.'[5] W. B. Honey also wrote a purely historical account for *The Burlington,* 'Royal Portraits in Pottery and Porcelain'[6], which had little relevance to contemporary debates. 'The Ceramic Sculpture of Wilfred Norton'[7] featuring a little known contemporary modeller was published by *Apollo* in 1931. Kinerton Parkes' article was distinguished by an extensive preamble and uncritical homily on the virtue of clay in which he tried unsuccessfully to reflect Norton's mystical interests and the writings of Rudolf Steiner. Parkes' only other publication was the undistinguished 'Pottery Animals' written for *The Arts and Crafts* in 1928. 'Lord Dunsany and Some Potters at Messrs. Colnaghi's'[8] was one of the more unusual exhibitions from this period and featured a diverse range of work including that of W. B. Dalton, Cardew, Parnell, Norton. Of Lord Dunsany himself the following was written: 'Nothing could be more opposed both to the art of the potter and the art of the sculptor as seen in this exhibition than Lord Dunsay's "Caricatures in Clay"'[9]

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[3] Rackham, B., 'Dwight Figures ; New Acquisitions at South Kensington', *The Burlington,* Vol. CVIII, No. CCCXXXIX, June 1931.
[4] Rackham, June 1931, p. 283.
[5] Rackham, June 1931, p.283.
[6] Honey, W. B., 'Royal Portraits in Pottery and Porcelain' *The Burlington,* Vol. LXX, No. CDX, May 1937.
[7] Parkes, K., 'The Ceramic Sculpture of Wilfred Norton' *Apollo,* Vol. XIV, No. 84 December, 1931.
[8] 'Lord Dunsany and Some Potters at Messrs. Colnaghis's', *Apollo,* Vol. XVII, No. 97, January, 1933.
[9] 'Lord Dunsany and Some Potters at Messrs. Colnaghis's', *Apollo,* 1933.

The most consistent presence in figurative modelling throughout the decade was the husband and wife team Charles and Nell Vyse. Charles was commonly referred to as the 'artist' while Nell, who was a chemist by training, took responsibility for the high technical standard of the work. As the identity of studio pottery divided in the late 1920s into the pro-craft approach of Leach or the avant garde aspirations of Staite Murray, many lesser potters were stranded mid-way. The Vyses, who made both thrown and modelled work, did not naturally align with either trend. From 1928 onwards they held annual exhibitions at Walker's Galleries in New Bond Street. [10] Marriot reviewed the Vyse's exhibition of 1931 in *The Times* and discussed the thrown pottery in preference to the modelled figures. His response was that the pottery was technically proficient but aesthetically stilted, a view consistent with the critical response to past exhibitions. He described the Vyse's pots as 'a little unfeeling in form'[11] but distinguished by 'technical and scientific research.' Marriot's comment that the Vyses were creating modern standards of technical excellence was poignant given the technical unevenness of much studio pottery. A review of the Vyse's 1935 exhibition at the Walker Galleries in *Apollo* described the range of work: 'from bowls of noble proportion to tiny ashtrays [as] an art ... maintained on a catholic basis'[12]. Their modelled figurines, described as 'local portraiture' were praised for their narrative appeal while the decorated beer mugs were discussed in terms of their vigorous designs. Technical discussion dominated this review and the Vyse's were credited with having 'penetrated

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[10] *Walker's Monthly*, a promotional publication, featured articles on the shows but these have been excluded from this thesis in favour of more objective critical responses.
[11] Marriot, C., 'Mr. and Mrs. Vyse', *The Times*, December 2, 1931.

the mystery' of the techniques of early Oriental pottery. *Apollo* reviewed a group exhibition that reflected the growing incorporation of studio pottery within official arts organisations. 'The National Society of Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, Potters, at the R. I. Galleries'[13] mentioned the Vyse's contribution, but only in passing. Studio pottery was accepted into the National Society in 1930 , a 'modernist version of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society'.[14] Marriot briefly reviewed the Vyse's exhibition at Walker's Galleries later in the year but again concentrated on the material qualities, commending them for 'the high quality of their glazes.'[15] In a cryptic remark which possibly indicated his discontent with the predominance of Oriental influences he discussed a new line of painted pottery 'there are some interesting attempts to get away from the Chinese model—which is playing for safety'. This view was echoed by Jan Gordon, the art critic of *The Observer,* who found the Vyses' new British styled beer mugs more interesting than the Oriental inspired stonewares.

> 'Naturally, quite a large amount of their normal production is of that popular and fashionable British development out of the Sung pottery which it would be almost lèse majesté[16] to rechristen as B'ung.'[17]

Some serious concerns about national identity lay behind this humorous comment. The review was written the year after 'English Pottery Old and New'[18] which examined the nature of English identity in contemporary

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[12] J. G. N., 'A Chelsea Potters' Exhibition', *Apollo,* January, 1935.
[13] 'The National Society of Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, Potters, at the R. I. Galleries', *Apollo,* March, 1935.
[14] Harrod, 1999, p. 129.
[15] Marriot, C., 'Artistic Sensibility, *The Times,* 19 December, 1935.
[16] The Oxford Concise translates lèse majesté as 'injured sovereignty'.
[17] Gordon, J., 'Christmas Exhibitions', *The Observer,* 13 December, 1936.
[18] See Chapter 19 for a full account of the exhibition and nationalist identity.

ceramics. 'Lèse majesté' or 'injured sovereignty' refers to the widespread debate about the integrity of English modern pottery in the wake of the Modern Movement. Sung pottery may have been a benchmark of excellence since the Burlington Exhibition of 1910, but critical attitudes to studio pottery in the mid 1930s were beginning to offer alternatives. Gordon's term 'B'ung' was a precursor of the less witty 'Anglo-Oriental' which is now used to describe the marriage of British and oriental elements in studio pottery.

The growing acceptance of studio pottery's place within English art was demonstrated by the opening of The Brygos Gallery in New Bond Street in 1936. As the Foreword to the first catalogue stated, this was a gallery 'devoted exclusively to the products of the kiln'[19] and was run in 'conjunction with the Applied Heat Company'.[20] The opening exhibition of The Brygos Gallery featured Frank Dobson's modelled terracotta and a selection of English pottery which cost under £10. The potters included Braden, Cardew, J. Cole, W. V. Cole, Dunn, Finnemore, Haile, Leach, Mitchell, W & L Norton, Peerebroom, Rhodes and Terry. Some of these names are unknown today. Others such as Dora Lunn and Sibyl Finnemore had not been reviewed in the mainstream press although they had been featured in *The Studio Year Book* since the 1920s. Sam Haile was a recent graduate of the ceramics department under Staite Murray at the Royal College of Art. Dobson was still regarded as an important sculptor but his

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[19] Mortimer, R., foreword to 'Terra-Cottas' by Frank Dobson, London, *The Brygos Gallery*, November, 1936.
[20] Marriot, C., 'Terra-Cottas and Pottery', *The Times*, 5 December, 1936.

career had been eclipsed by a younger generation of Modernists such as Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore. The catalogue reflected the debate taking place in Modernist sculpture between carving and modelling which had wider implications for ceramic modelling and helps to explain its decline. Direct carving was the preferred choice of this new group as Hepworth explained in an interview published in 1932. ' Carving is more adapted to the expression of the accumulative ideas of experience and clay [i. e.] modelling] to the visual attitude.'[21] In contrast, Raymond Mortimer took an anti-Modernist stance in the foreword to the exhibition catalogue arguing for modelling on the grounds of tradition and cost: 'it is cheap'.[22] Mortimer cited examples of historical modelling from Greek terracotta to Tang Dynasty tomb figures to justify his arguments. Charles Marriot was the first critic to review the exhibition and his article was devoted mainly to Dobson's sculptures. The studio pottery received a cursory mention only, acknowledging Haile and a few others. Marriot also briefly mentioned a concurrent Vyse exhibition where he preferred the figures to the pottery, describing them as 'perfectly at home in the material and excellent from a compositional point of view.'[23] The Brygos Gallery managed to generate a few short references in the press over the next few years but no substantive critical articles have been discovered. *Apollo* was supportive of the new venture and described the opening exhibition of work under £10 as 'simple, delightful and astonishingly reasonable in price.'[24] In March the following

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[21] 'The Modern Artist - Barbara Hepworth', *The Studio*, Vol. CIV, No. 477, December, 1932, p. 333.
[22] Mortimer, November, 1936.
[23] Marriot, 5 December, 1936.
[24] 'The Brygos Gallery', *Apollo*, January, 1937, p. 53.

year *Apollo* printed details of a mixed exhibition which included Margaret Rey stating the work was 'all excellent in taste and many exceptionally good in form and technique.'[25] *Apollo* also reported an exhibition of "Beer Sets"[26] without comment, but criticised a design exhibition at the gallery as 'neither entirely convincing as designs by a potter for piece-meal pottery nor as factory manufactured articles.'[27] Exhibitions of work by Cardew , Haile and Rey do not seem to have been reviewed.

16.2 Books

The 1930s witnessed an increase in the number of books specifically published in relation to studio pottery. While the ubiquitous 'how to do it' manual prevailed, those written by potters included the first modern accounts of studio pottery. Still a young and marginal discipline, substantive histories such as George Wingfield Digby's *The Work of the Modern Potter*[28] and Muriel Rose's *Artist Potters in England*[29] would not be written until the 1950s.

Although Dora Lunn was virtually ignored by the critical press in 1931 she published *Pottery in the Making*[30] which consisted of a very general history of ceramics and technical chapters aimed at the educational market: 'There no longer exist in the educational world any doubts at all as to the cultural

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[25] 'The Brygos Gallery', *Apollo*, March, 1937, p. 169.
[26] 'The Brygos Gallery', *Apollo*, May, 1937, p. 301.
[27] 'The Pottery designed by Mr. Erling B. Olsen', *Apollo*, December, 1937, p. 295.
[28] Wingfield Digby, G., *The Work of the Modern Potter*, London, John Murray, 1952.
[29] Rose, R., *Artist Potters in England*, London, Faber & Faber, 1955.

value of handicraft'[31]. The book added little to contemporary debate but captures the period with a photograph of Dora Lunn throwing while wearing a hat. Another technical manual aimed at the amateur and educational market was Henry and Denise Wren's *Pottery : The Finger Built Methods*[32] published in 1932 which followed their book *Handcraft Pottery* of 1928. Unusually, the Wrens promoted methods of hand building rather than throwing, countering the general dominance of English and Chinese thrown pottery. 'Knowledge of what has been done by the white and yellow races is vital enough, but the true craftsman will seek the fundamentals ... in the art of all times and places.'[33] With its diluted Formalist language and reverence for primitive art the Wren's book revealed the extent to which Fry's ideas had pervaded the wider arts market.

> 'both beauty and ugliness of a considered sort are, really, incidental things. The undeniable interest of these examples, and their particular value to the student, is that they are planned arrangements of form and colour.'[34]

Gordon Forsyth also wrote a technical manual *Art and Craft of the Potter*[35] which, in contrast to the Wren's book, had more of an industrial approach to ceramics and was less relevant to the studio pottery sector. *Art and Craft of the Potter* did not include a chapter on the general history of pottery, but Forsyth's book *20th Century Ceramics*[36] which was published in 1936 provided an assessment of modern international ceramics and included the

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[30] Lunn, D., *Pottery in the Making*, Leicester & London, Dryad Press, 1931.
[31] Lunn, 1931.
[32] Wren, H & D, *Pottery : The Finger Built Methods*, London, Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1932.
[33] Wren, 1932, p. 4.
[34] Wren, 1932, p. 6.
[35] Forsyth, G., *Art and Craft of the Potter*, London, Chapman & Hall Ltd, 1934.

first illustrated survey of studio pottery. Published by *The Studio,* it followed a similar pattern to the Year Books with abundant illustrations accompanied by a few short chapters. The sub -title *An International Survey of the Best Work Produced by Modern Craftsmen, Artists and Manufacturers* indicates the breadth of Forsyth's coverage of ceramics. The illustrations included contemporary design, examples of vernacular pottery and individual artistic ceramics from different countries including Mexico, Hungary, China and the U. S. A. The emphasis however was on European work; apart from English studio pottery there were examples of individual Modernist ceramics by the German potter Otto Lindig, the Dutch potter Marguerite Wildenstein, Lucie Rie and Jean-Paul Gauguin, the modeller who worked at Bing and Grondahl in Denmark.

The ambitiousness of the survey was not matched by Forsyth's writing preoccupied as he was with current dilemmas in English manufacturing industry. Forsyth proposed three categories of classification: functional, decorative and tableware, which should be both functional and decorative. In his second chapter 'A Standard of Judgement' Forsyth attempted to repeat the critical writings of Read and Thorpe with their analysis on form and aesthetics but it constituted little more than a general discussion on functional efficiency. Forsyth's attempt to steer a middle course between what he perceived as the extremes of Functionalist theory and the conservative forces of British industry resulted in a bland restatement of general principles. Whereas Read and the critic and writer Geoffrey Grigson

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[36] Forsyth, G., *20th Century Ceramics,* London, The Studio, 1936.

were arguing for a revolution of aesthetics and form built on the Modern Movement, Forsyth was attempting a compromise with the current standards of industry. His views on studio pottery were non committal. He acknowledged that studio potters were 'concerned with pottery as a means of artistic expression rather than the winning of a commercial market'[37] and encouraged a role for them in design. But he could not extend beyond a general appeal for their incorporation into industry and did not offer solutions such as the Bauhaus ideas of workshop training. Forsyth was rooted in the Stoke-on-Trent tradition and did not have the objectivity or inclination to criticise prevailing attitudes, or meaningfully engage with Modern Movement theory and practise, or studio pottery. The *Studio Year Books* provided interesting snap shots of specific times through their general surveys of design, architecture and the crafts, and this publication provided the equivalent for the late inter-war period.

16.3 *The Art of the Potter*

From the perspective of studio pottery the two most interesting books published during the 1930s were *The Art of the Potter*[38] by Dora Billington in 1937 and *A Potter's Book*[39] by Bernard Leach in 1940 which will be discussed in Chapter 21 with the rest of Leach's writing. In *The Art of the Potter* Billington managed to combine technical information with brief histories of English and Chinese pottery and European porcelain. Uniquely,

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[37] Forsyth, 1936, p. 27.
[38] Billington, D., *The Art of the Potter*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1937.
[39] Leach, 1940.

she also wrote the first history of studio pottery to appear in book form. Having worked for Bernard Moore when she was young, Billington had by then taught at the Royal College of Art and Central School of Design for twenty years, designed for industry and made her own individual work. She was in an ideal position to evaluate the place of studio pottery within contemporary ceramics and design. *The Art of the Potter*[40] was published as part of The Little Craft Books series, with the declared intention to 'help the public to knowledge and understanding of the crafts in which their interest is awakened.' [41]

Billington's final chapter 'The Pottery of To-Day' included a short history of studio pottery which, although consistent with many critical responses written over the previous decade, was non-partisan. Through her expertise in industry and association with the Central School's progressive attitude to design, she viewed the division between studio pottery and industry as regrettable. She regarded studio pottery as distinct from designed ceramics because the studio potter was responsible for all stages of the work: 'The brain which conceives the pot controls the making of it also.' [42]. She argued that studio pottery was a branch of 'so-called fine art'[43] because it was removed from the concerns of utility and because it was 'produced primarily for aesthetic reasons'. Questioning this division Billington argued that studio pottery and industry should aim for a social inclusiveness 'for the advantage of themselves and in the service of the community.'

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[40] Billington, 1937.
[41] Billington, 1937, Editor's Preface.
[42] Billington, 1937, p. 108.

Billington was broad-minded in her classification of studio pottery practice, although her most animated remarks were on the issue of utility. Beginning with the Martin brothers she also included the painted designs of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant and the Powells which she described as 'exuberant and refreshing in these days of sparse and timid pattern.'[44] Billington claimed studio pottery had re-established the value of the wheel: 'Throwing has been saved in England by the studio potter, just as it was in danger of dying out, and it has returned in a more complete form'.[45] She was not a 'B'ung' potter, but she acknowledged the popularity of Sung pottery and tactfully expressed an interest in investigating the 'various factors that have combined to place so many potters under this spell'[46]. Billington followed usual critical practice in ascribing the characteristics of 'vitality and simplicity'[47] to studio pottery and linking it to 'an interest in primitive art of all kinds.'[48]. Her assessment of individuals was decorous. Leach was the only studio potter to be illustrated and she discussed him first, writing that 'English potters owe much to [his] inspiration'[49] (although it was unspecified whether this was for his teaching or his work). Billington acknowledged Leach's time in Japan and stated that his pots displayed the merits of Oriental pottery. Staite Murray was described as producing 'magnificent big pots with their interesting mysterious surface-treatments [which] reach out

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[43] Billington, 1937, p. 102.
[44] Billington, 1937, p. 110.
[45] Billington, 1937, p. 111.
[46] Billington, 1937, p. 110.
[47] Billington, 1937, p. 108.
[48] Billington, 1937, p. 108.
[49] Billington, 1937, p. 111.

to possibilities as yet unexplored.' The Vyses were praised for revealing the secrets of glazing and reviving the Chelsea figurine.

The Art of the Potter was published during a period of critical re-evaluation as the first phase of studio pottery had effectively come to an end. Staite Murray's career was in freefall, and Leach had abandoned making functional slipware and purported to have ceased making decorative stoneware; he had not yet started to produce his ' Standard Ware'. Billington questioned the speed and nature of studio pottery's direction.

> 'Studio pottery has developed so rapidly that there has been no time to ask where it is all leading. The joy of doing the job tends to be an end in itself.'[50]

Her solution was that studio potters should apply their skills and the practicality of stoneware to make functional pottery and that, apart from Cardew, Pleydell-Bouverie and some of Leach's work, studio pottery 'tends to be simply decorative'. She asked the question: 'Cannot useful things be made in stoneware?'[51] This stance on utility reinforced Leach's position at this time and in her appeal for art to be 'really vital and valuable' she reiterated Arts and Crafts arguments, post-Morris. Unlike Read and Grigson, Billington did not encourage the potter to work within industry but suggested that he raised the standard of production by working in parallel with industry. Even at this early stage in the development of studio pottery she was aware of the difference in pricing between decorative and practical work.

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[50] Billington, 1937, p. 111.
[51] Billington, 1937, p. 111.

> 'At present, unfortunately, people who will pay a high price for a cabinet piece will not pay more than a mass-production price for something to use, and the potter is faced with the paradox that a beautiful, but purely decorative, shape may sell for some pounds, and be considered worth it, whilst an equally beautiful jug or tea-pot, probably more trouble to make, can only be sold for as many shillings. One would like to say to the purchaser, Is it not more worth while to pay a reasonable price for something really beautiful to use, even if it may eventually get broken?' [52]

Leach wrote a positive review of *The Art of the Potter*, and complemented Billington for the totality of her approach which combined individual and industrial views. He praised the book as an important first step in defining a set of aesthetic values for ceramics as it existed in the East.

> 'But the outstanding merit of this book is that it is written with an unobtrusive standard of values. There has never existed a criterion of ceramic beauty in Europe as there has in the Far East.' [53]

Although Leach failed to specify the exact nature of these values or the single criterion of beauty in the East, he regarded Billington's book as aiding the spread of 'conscious craftsmanship' and linking studio and industry. More significantly, Leach praised the book in 'Towards a Standard', the opening of *A Potter's Book*. While decrying the lack of worthwhile books for studio pottery he wrote 'Exceptions must be made in the case of Dora Billington's short but informative volume.[54]

Leach's *A Potter's Book* is widely regarded as the first and most important book on studio pottery, but Billington's *The Art of the Potter* has been overlooked and deserves wider recognition. The strength of Leach's book

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[52] Billington, 1937, p. 112.
[53] Leach, B., review of The Art of the Potter, *G. H's Weekly*, 17 June, 1937.

was the singularity of its vision; it did not include a historical overview, an appraisal of current industry or a brief history of studio pottery as a new discipline. Billington managed to effortlessly combine these elements plus technical information and write an engaging and balanced book.

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[54] Leach, B., *A Potter's Book*, London, Faber & Faber, 1940, p 26.

Chapter 17

Staite Murray

Staite Murray's critical reputation reached its pinnacle in 1930 but after this went into rapid decline. In contrast to the extensive coverage he received at the end of the 1920s he received only four reviews after 1933, the last, in 1936, being derogatory. This chapter will chart and discuss the reasons for the increasingly negative response to his exhibitions during the early and mid 1930s.

The climate of art and ceramic criticism was changing during the 1930s because of an increasing interest in the machine aesthetic of the Modern Movement and the rise of Surrealism. The identity of studio pottery also began to change as a result of Leach's interest in utility and the social role of craft. Staite Murray's decline marked the end of the first phase of studio pottery and a critical rationale built on Formalist values.

Read had responded to Staite Murray's work earlier in the year. In May 1930 he published 'Art and Decoration' in *The Listener*[1], which was illustrated with a painted tile panel by Staite Murray. In the article, Read argued for a re-evaluation of decorative art across the fine and applied arts.

> 'in so far as the pot or chair is a work of art it justifies itself irrespective of its use. The beauty of a typical piece of Chinese pottery of the Sung

[1] Read, H., 'Art and Decoration', *The Listener*, 7 May, 1930, p. 805.

> dynasty is exactly parallel to the beauty of a piece of Gothic sculpture or a painting by Cézanne.[2]

Read argued that Western art had been dependent on the canvas since the Renaissance. Evoking the mentality of pottery collectors he coined the term 'cabinet paintings'. He concluded by discussing Staite Murray and his pupils' recent work .

> 'Some experiments recently conducted at the Royal College of Art School of Pottery under the direction of Mr W. Staite Murray are interesting as revelations of the possibilities that lie before canvas-free artists. Mr. Murray's own pottery has now for several years been making its way in to public consciousness, and even the critics have been impelled to consider it, not as pottery, but as art. Mr Murray has now turned his attention to tile painting, and in this new medium he and his pupils continue to be primarily artists.'[3]

17.1 Herbert Read's *The Appreciation of Pottery*

The high point of studio pottery's critical achievement during the inter-war years was, in orthodox Modernist terms, the publication in 1930 of Herbert Read's essay *The Appreciation of Pottery*. This was published to accompany Staite Murray's first solo exhibition, 'Pottery, Painting and Furniture',[4] at the prestigious Lefevre Galleries. After six solo exhibitions at Paterson's Gallery between 1924 and 1929, Staite Murray moved to the Lefevre Galleries where he had shown with Nicholson and Wood in 1928. *The Appreciation of*

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[2] Read, May 1930, p. 805.
[3] Read, May 1930, p. 805.
[4] Staite Murray showed stoneware and porcelain (1926), stoneware and drypoint etchings (1927), stoneware, paintings and furniture (1930), stoneware, paintings and sculpture (1932) and pots, paintings and drawings (1935)

Pottery [5] was published anonymously under the initials 'X. X.' as it was the section on pottery that Read would include in his book *The Meaning of Art*[6] the following year. The essay developed further Read's ideas of pottery as an abstract art, first voiced in *English Pottery* in 1924, which had been adopted by Staite Murray and many critics such as Marriot, Thorpe and Konody. In *The Appreciation of Pottery* Read discussed pottery from Greece, China, Peru and Medieval England and redefined his ideas of its abstract nature.

> 'Pottery is at once the simplest and most difficult of all the arts. It is the simplest because it is the most elemental ; it is the most difficult because it is the most abstract.
> ... Judge the art of a country, judge the finesses of its sensibility, by its pottery ; it is a sure touchstone. Pottery is pure art ; it is art freed from any imitative intention. Sculpture, to which it is most nearly related, had from the first an imitative intention, and is perhaps to that extent less free for the expression of the will to form than pottery ; pottery is plastic art in its most abstract essence.'[7]

The Appreciation of Pottery consolidated Read's earlier views. While the idea of pottery as abstract art can be credited to Read, he was not above borrowing ideas from other writers. His maxim 'Judge the art of a country, judge the finesses of its sensibility, by its pottery; it is a sure touchstone' echoes a leader in the Times from 1924 'It is by no arbitrary touchstone that nations are judged when it is sought to assess the degree of their culture, by their pottery.'[8] His classification of Greek pottery as 'static harmony' and Chinese pottery as 'dynamic harmony' also echoed W. A. Thorpe's essay

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[5] Read, H., 'The Appreciation of Pottery', catalogue for Pottery, Paintings and Furniture by Staite Murray, London, *Alex. Reid & Lefevre*, Nov., 1930.
[6] Read, H., 'The Meaning of Art', London, *Faber & Faber*, 1931.
[7] Read, 1930.
[8] 'The Prince in the Potteries', *The Times*, 13 June, 1924.

'Form in Pottery' of 1926 and classification of pottery into two types of work, 'dynamic' and 'statuesque form'[9].

The Appreciation of Pottery made an immediate impact; reviews of the exhibition recognised the importance of the essay and it has since become a seminal text in 20th century writing on ceramics. Read allowed the Lefevre Gallery to publish *The Appreciation of Pottery* a year in advance of its inclusion in his book *The Meaning of Art* [10] . This event confirmed his association with studio pottery, although he did not make specific reference to Staite Murray's work or that of any other studio potter. Just as he had done with *English Pottery*, Read promoted a universal theory that was applicable to all types of pottery. He would develop this theory in his book *Art and Industry*[11] four years later.

17.2 Critical Reviews 1930 - 1936

Marriot opened his review of Staite Murray's exhibition by discussing Read's *The Appreciation of Pottery* declaring that it was 'one of the most remarkable pieces of aesthetic writing that we have ever read'.[12] He was, as ever, complimentary about the pottery, paintings and furniture, describing them as directed 'to the same emotional end' as a form of 'Plastic feelings'. His only reservation was that the brush decoration was occasionally out of sympathy with the forms.

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[9] Thorpe, 1926, p. 165.
[10] Read, H., *The Meaning of Art*, London, Faber & Faber, 1931.
[11] Read, 1934.

Herbert Furst, the editor of *Apollo,* covered Staite Murray's exhibition and he also opened his review by discussing Read's essay. Furst mistakenly thought that 'the very admirable preface'[13] had been written by Staite Murray and found the claim that pottery was abstract unconvincing because in Staite Murray's work there was 'some kind of representation'. In an otherwise perceptive review Furst discussed the nomenclature and status of Staite Murray's pottery within the art market.

> 'Mr Murray's pots, a humble word, but more palatable than the Graeco-Roman mongrel "ceramics," are for the most part really "high art" ... Whether a wider section of the public will be able to recognise that is another matter.'

Furst was generally positive about the work. Unusually, he discussed its tactile aspects, stating that the pots had 'such powerful attraction that the eye alone is not content, it must needs invite the hand to come and join it in the feast'. At this stage in his career Staite Murray was exhibiting up to three hundred pots at a time; the more expensive were priced at 100 guineas, although the majority were as little as 2 guineas. In a general overview of current exhibitions *Artwork* touched briefly on Staite Murray's show, judging that it 'had a refinement which went beyond even his own past products'[14] and commenting on the fact that although the large number of teabowls were not likely to be used, 'the designs in themselves are excellent.'

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[12] Marriot, C., 'Mr Staite Murray', *The Times,* 7 November, 1930.
[13] Furst, H., 'Pottery, Paintings, and Furniture by Staite Murray at the Lefevre Galleries', *Apollo,* December, 1930, p. 461.
[14] 'A Chronicle of Exhibitions', *Artwork,* Vol. VII, No. 25, Spring 1931, p. 70.

Comparing the degree to which studio potters had been influenced by Chinese art in an article in *Artwork* in 1930, W. A. Thorpe summarised Staite Murray's work as

> 'more remote from Sung, but his monumental impression leaves me sometimes a little doubtful whether I am not looking at a new kind of sculpture, wondering if his pots are hollow after all.'[15]

After the triumph of Staite Murray's 1930 exhibition and Read's associated essay, Marriot's review of 1931, 'Two Potters'[16] , began to cast doubts about the potter. Discussing both Staite Murray and Hamada, Marriot returned to the themes he had first raised at the end of the 1920s (following the publication of Leach's *A Potter's Outlook)* and claimed that they demonstrated 'the extreme possibilities of the art of potting.' He discussed the foreword to Hamada's exhibition catalogue in which Yanagi had declared that Hamada's intention was to remove 'the pot "from the parlour to the living-room and the kitchen"'. Marriot described Hamada as putting 'the emphasis upon the utility of the pot, while Mr. Murray carries it in the direction of sculpture'. He had growing reservations about Staite Murray's claim that pottery had the right to exist independently of utilitarian concerns.

> 'The emphasis, that is to say, is upon the aesthetic intention. Since it is kept within the pot convention it is legitimate, but one cannot help feeling that it is just a little dangerous. We all value the person with a beautiful nature, but most of all when it is expressed in everyday affairs; when it is, so to speak, consciously applied , we are inclined to shrink.'

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[15] Thorpe. W. A., 'English Stoneware Pottery by Miss K. Pleydell-Bouverie and Miss D. K. N. Braden, *Artwork*, Winter, 1930, p. 260.
[16] Marriot, C., 'Two Potters', *The Times*, 10 November, 1930.

Marriot provides an insight into Staite Murray's critical standing at the time in his concluding paragraph.

> 'If Mr. Murray's pots aspire to the condition of sculpture the new works by young British artists, in the room upstairs, may be said to aspire to the condition of pottery. Not, in the case, by the way of utility but by putting the emphasis upon the abstract appeal of form and colour. Mr Henry Moore, the sculptor, takes the lead in interest.'[17]

The following year, Marriot expressed further doubts about Staite Murray's pottery and shifted his position as to its abstract nature. Four years earlier, Marriot had described Staite Murray as having 'made of pottery a complete form of emotional expression, combining the more abstract possibilities of sculpture and painting'[18] and had done this 'without prejudice to the possible utility of what he produces'.[19] Having recently described Leach's essay *A Potter's Outlook* as an interesting pamphlet which 'inspires confidence by facing facts and conditions'[20] Marriot now referred to Leach pushing 'the resources of the small private kiln ... as far as they will go to meet factory production'[21] in positive terms. Marriot was by now discussing pottery as a model for industrial practice, effectively circumscribing the potential of pottery to be an expressive and abstract art. This critical *volte face* is evident in Marriot's discussion of a modelled head which Staite Murray exhibited.

> 'That Mr. Murray should paint and model his "Head in Terra Cotta"... is all to the good because, in his enthusiasm for form and colour in the abstract, he has lately been in some danger of forgetting that a pot is

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[17] Marriot, November, 1931.
[18] Marriot, C., 'Stoneware Pottery', *The Times*, 3 November, 1928.
[19] Marriot, November, 1928.
[20] Marriot, C., 'Stoneware Pottery', *The Times*, 31 March, 1930.
[21] Marriot, C., 'Stoneware Pottery', *The Times*, 29 October, 1931.

> after all a pot. Not that the pot is limited to base utility, but that beyond a certain point its artistic aspirations are better absorbed in actual representation.'[22]

Marriot may have come to adopt these new views on studio pottery independently or as a result of wider debate taking place around him. However, he had always been interested in the relationship between industry and craft. The 1930s witnessed a rapid growth of interest in design related matters and several exhibitions of British Industrial art which explored the relationship between industry and craft took place in 1934. Read also published *Art and Industry* in 1934, and the exhibition 'English Pottery Old and New' which compared vernacular, industrial and studio pottery was held in 1935. Chapter 19 will discuss these in detail. As this thesis argues in Chapter 15, it is possible to trace the origins of Marriot's change of opinion directly to Leach's criticism of studio pottery in *A Potter's Outlook* although his questioning of Staite Murray's work had clearly taken root before the general interest in industry grew.

Since Marriot had reviewed Staite Murray's exhibitions on an annual basis since 1924, the gap of two years before his next review was unusual. Marriot was more warmly disposed towards the work than he had been in 1932, although his attitude to pottery overall seemed to have changed. He described Staite Murray as aiming 'very high and, certainly in the right direction'[23]. Marriot reverted to old form, making a comparison of the work with Chinese pottery. This perhaps was in response to Leach's increased

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[22] Marriot, C., 'Lefevre Galleries', *The Times*, 7 November, 1932.
[23] Marriot, C., 'Mr Staite Murray', *The Times*, 26 April, 1934.

prominence following his recent exhibition with Tomimoto and the wave of interest in Chinese art that took place in the mid 1930s. Instead of discussing the abstract qualities or unity of the work he described Staite Murray as a decorator of pots 'a genuine painter rather than a sculptor in pottery' and commented on the sensuous nature of the glazes. Although there was no direct criticism, Marriot's general remarks on studio pottery revealed his growing disillusionment 'It would be hard to discover a trace of that smug, bucolic roughness which is the mark of so much modern pottery.' Although not particularly long, this was the last significant review that Marriot wrote on Staite Murray. The following year he incorporated a short paragraph on the potter's 1935 exhibition at Lefevre Galleries into a general review entitled 'Arts and Crafts: Representative Shows'[24]. In 1928 he had championed Staite Murray above all other studio potters, as a contemporary abstract artist of international stature; Marriot now included his work amongst reviews of cutlery at the Little Gallery, religious painting and Scandinavian glass. Although complimentary, describing Staite Murray's show as 'one of his most satisfying exhibitions' this was cursory in comparison to his earlier enthusiasm. The loss of one of the most important supporters of studio pottery was not felt by Staite Murray alone. Marriot's critical response to Leach will be discussed in detail in Chapter 21, but his disaffection with studio pottery was revealed in a casual remark in 1933: 'except in quality, one pot is, after all, very much like another pot.'[25] Marriot published only four reviews of studio pottery exhibitions between 1934 and 1936, two on Staite Murray in 1934 and 1935, one on Leach in 1936

[24] Marriot, C., 'Arts and Crafts : Representative Shows', *The Times*, 15 November, 1935.

and the last on Pleydell-Bouverie and Braden's Christmas exhibition in 1936 in comparison to over forty reviews between 1923 and 1933. Not only did studio pottery lose an important critical ally but it lost *The Times*, an important platform for the dissemination of its ideas. The last mention of studio pottery in *The Times* during the inter war period was an article on a new art gallery in Southampton but it is unclear whether this was by Marriot or not. It included a passing mention of a bequest by Canon Eric Milner-White, the most prominent collector of studio pottery of the period. Studio pottery was suggested as a temporary alternative for display purposes because 'the acquisition of good contemporary sculpture is likely to be slow'.[26] Harrod discusses Marriot's introduction to the catalogue of the British Council *Exhibition of Modern British Crafts* sent to the U. S. A. in 1940 in which he wrote 'pottery is, precisely, abstract sculpture'[27]. By the evidence of his increased disinterest in studio pottery over the previous ten years, this was little more than the bland repetition of a catch-phrase from an earlier era.

Apollo reviewed Staite Murray's 1935 exhibition at Lefevre Gallery but was critical of the new work. The anonymous reviewer wrote 'Undoubtedly, Mr. Murray is one of our foremost potters, but though his hands are in the clay his head is surely in the clouds.'[28] The pots were complimented for the 'pure poetry' of their forms but the titles that had always been flamboyant were now pilloried and compared to 'the programme of a Bond Street dress

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[25] Marriot, C., 'Mr. Bernard Leach', *The Times*, 5 December, 1933.
[26] 'A Civic Art Centre', *The Times*, 27 April, 1939.
[27] Harrod, 1999, p. 41.

show.' The last published response to Staite Murray's pottery so far discovered was in *Apollo* the following year. Considering the relatively recent acclaim for his work it was a less than auspicious conclusion to his critical career. The editor Herbert Furst disapproved of the new work because of its 'rough glaze'[29], exaggerated throwing marks and segmented forms, and again he challenged the relevance of the titles.

> 'And can he really reconcile the labelling of his pottery, such as "Chorus", "Hussar", "Nefertiti", with the abstract significance of form on which he once so much insisted. A pot's a pot for a' that, and a jar that, like the one called "The Law," which looks as if would topple over, even at the touch of a glance, let alone a hand, is as unsatisfactory as a pot or an argument that won't hold water.'[30]

The far less enthusiastic response to Staite Murray's pottery in the early 1930s may have been due to a decline in the quality of his work but internal arguments within studio pottery could have been as much a cause. Staite Murray's demise was rapid, particularly when compared to the speed with which he achieved his earlier success.

17.3 *A Potter's Outlook* and a Critical Shift

Like Leach and Wells, Staite Murray had benefited from the initial enthusiasm for studio pottery because it was relevant to the Modernist theories of the 1910s and 1920s. Leach's criticism of artist potters working to

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[28] 'Art News and Notes', *Apollo*, Dec. 1935, p. 359.
[29] Furst, H., 'Mr Staite Murray's Exhibition at Messrs. Reid and Lefevre's Galleries, *Apollo*, Dec., 1936, p. 72.
[30] Furst, Dec. 1936, p. 72.

please themselves 'as artists first'[31] published in *A Potter's Outlook* severely compromised the critical standing of studio pottery. Within the perimeters of Modernist debate, this was a re-positioning of studio pottery from an aspirational and progressive discipline to one with a conservative intent. This is not to discredit Leach's view of studio pottery as a force for social good, and his desire to tackle the 'materialism of industry'[32] and produce 'affordable pots for daily use'. Instead, one could argue that his position was at odds with the fragile critical identity studio pottery had established during its first few years. The initial enthusiasm for Staite Murray, Wells and Leach's work was not built upon the rhetoric of Ruskin, but on the Modernism of Fry, Bell and Rutter. As Part I and II of this thesis have argued, the critical identity of studio pottery developed from a Formalist vision of art. The appreciation of vernacular English and early Chinese pottery was in turn mediated through Fry's Modernist ideas of primitivism. All the studio potters, directly or indirectly, benefited from this association with Modernism throughout the 1920s as the wholesale adoption of Read's ideas of abstraction reveal. Konody and Rutter's reviews of the Guild of Potters' exhibition in 1925 were a case in point. This exhibition included a range of thrown pottery by Staite Murray, Wells and W. B. Dalton and figurative work by Vyse, Croft, and Parnell. Bernard Rackham's foreword discussed pottery and abstraction to which Konody and Rutter referred. Neither mentioned Leach. Although he was member of the Guild of Potter's Leach still benefited from Modernism by association and from his earliest reviews in the broadsheet press, such as McCance's piece of 1923, his work

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[31] Leach, 1928.

was discussed within the Formalist terms of expression, rhythm and design. As discussed in Chapter 14, this application of Formalist language also extended to the appreciation of figurative work. Rutter, a critic with impeccable Modernist credentials, used similar language in championing Parnell's work as a form of domestic sculpture.

As stated in the introduction, this thesis relies upon critical writing on studio pottery in the public domain, not private letters or unpublished material. Leach's views on studio pottery and utility are now an established part of the critical identity of 20th century ceramics perpetuated by many studio potters who either openly accept or reject his ideas. In 1928, Leach's career was not as prominent as it was in later years, nor were his ideas on studio pottery. His first group of students, Pleydell-Bouverie, Cardew and Braden had not yet established their careers and were producing relatively cheap pottery. Yanagi, Kawai and Hamada did not publicise their theories of Mingei and utility until their visit to England in 1929. Leach's critical contributions to public debate in the early to mid 1920s were relatively minor when compared to Staite Murray's essay 'Pottery From the Artist's Point of View' or the prolific output of critics such as Marriot or Rackham. Consequently, the disclosure of Leach's views in *A Potter's Outlook* in which emphasised the need to produce utilitarian pottery with what he called "the bread and butter' pot" created a significant impact.

> 'we free craftsmen must supply an actual need to a much greater extent than we have hitherto done. This will involve an element of restraint on the part of the potter-artist which will bring him in closer contact

[32] Leach, 1928.

> with life, and thereby provide a discerning public with pots in which utility and beauty are one.'[33]

Utilitarianism in studio pottery was not a significant feature of critical writing up to 1928 but was seen as the responsibility of industry. The relationship between industry and studio pottery at this stage was minimal and what discussion there had been placed the onus on manufacturing to respond to the new work being made by studio potters. As Chapter 15 has discussed, Marriot's position in 1927, the year before *A Potter's Outlook* was published, was to justify the high prices and exclusivity of studio pottery, arguing they served a purpose as "museum pieces" and 'the pottery trade will ultimately benefit by their example—as the world benefits by 'cloistered virtues."'[34] The designer John Adams of Poole Pottery also encouraged the studio potter's independence, regarding it as a strength. 'They react on the general situation from the outside'[35]. Of the major potters, Staite Murray, Wells and Vyse, Leach was alone in making a mixed portfolio of raku for tourists in St Ives, stoneware pots for display in London and limited quantities of slipware for daily use. The identity of studio pottery up to this stage had been built by potters and critics around the idea of individual work made for exhibition in London galleries. This reconfiguration of studio pottery from an artistic to a commercial pursuit had disastrous consequences for a tentative critic such as Marriot. He first lost confidence in Staite Murray's work and then eventually in the movement overall. Marriot was never the most original critic, generally following ideas and

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[33] Leach, 1928.
[34] Marriot, C., 'British Pottery', *The Times*, 30 Sept., 1927.

trends initiated by others. However, the loss to studio pottery of such a prominent and enthusiastic supporter was immeasurable.

17.4 'Post-Cubism'

Leach's attempt to reposition studio pottery from a Modernist and aesthetically driven discipline to an Arts and Crafts based craft with social concerns was one of several elements in Staite Murray's decline. External factors were also significant as the critical climate of English art was changing in the early 1930s. This next section briefly discusses the changes in contemporary art theory and practises to understand the changing context for studio pottery. Charles Harrison writes of the early 1930s.

> 'As the new avant-garde gathered strength and coherence it became clear that an interest in the post-Cubist European art of the post-war years was to be a feature serving to distinguish its members from adherents to a developed Post-Impressionism'.[36]

Post-Impressionism *per se* was becoming outmoded, and the critical theories that had facilitated and sustained studio pottery were losing their relevance. As the rationale of abstract art was now no longer justification alone, studio pottery that relied on this idea had to critically realign itself. Purely abstract art was drawing criticism in the art press of the early 1930s, as an article entitled 'The Tragic Position of Abstract Art' revealed. It featured the paintings of Fernand Leger and stated 'the prophets of "absolute abstraction"

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[35] Adams, J., 'Modern British Pottery', *The Architectural Review*, Vol. LIX, Jan-July 1926, p. 190.
[36] Harrison, 1993, p. 233.

themselves soon realised how narrow the basis of this expression is.'[37] *The Studio* published a series of five articles entitled 'What is Wrong with Modern Painting'[38] and Picasso was described in another article 'not as the flaming torch of the *avant garde*, but as one of the most conspicuous landmarks of the immediate past.'[39] Even Clive Bell acknowledged the critical changes in his article 'What Next in Art?'[40] published in *The Studio* in 1935. Here Bell wrote of Post-Impressionism's contribution to English art and admitted it 'has, unless I mistake[sic], run its course. It is complete.'[41] He acknowledged that the new movements in art no longer placed the emphasis on formal values alone, 'Surrealism was literary. Deliberately it sought content beyond the borders of plastic art ; it went to Marx and it went to Freud.'[42]

As this thesis has charted, studio pottery had embodied the abstract ideals of three-dimensional art during the 1920s. This was in part because English sculpture was in a state of eclipse: in a notice of a Parisian exhibition 'International Sculpture' in *The Studio* in 1930 that included artists such as Brancusi, Lipchitz, Archipenko and Maillol the reviewer concluded 'It is a pity, however that there is no contribution from England.'[43] By the end of the 1920s a new generation of young sculptors such as Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth were to emerge to take over the mantle of the leading

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[37] Saiko, G., 'The Tragic Position of Abstract Art', *The Studio*, Vol. CV, No. 478, Jan, 1933, p. 44.
[38] 'What is Wrong with Modern Painting I -V', *The Studio*, Feb. - May, 1932.
[39] Gaunt, W., 'Picasso and the Cul-De-Sac of Modern Painting', *The Studio*, Vol. CI, No. 459, June, 1931, p. 408.
[40] Bell, C., 'What Next in Art?', *The Studio*, Vol. CIX, No. 505, April, 1935.
[41] Bell, 1935, p. 176.
[42] Bell, 1935, p. 179.

abstract sculptors. The critic R. H. Wilenski published *The Meaning of Modern Sculpture*[44] in 1932 summarising Modernist developments and theoretical arguments for contemporary sculpture. The theory of pottery as an abstract art was not mentioned although Wilenski had discussed Staite Murray along with Dobson and Epstein in an article in *The Sphere* in 1927[45]. Pottery was returned to its former place amongst the applied arts when Wilenski discussed Chinese and Japanese sculpture 'As everyone knows, pottery, porcelain and miscellaneous bric-à-brac from China have exercised a considerable influence on European applied arts from the middle of the seventeenth century to the present day.'[46] Three years later, however, Wilenski briefly acknowledged Staite Murray's work in the article 'The Place of Sculpture' in *The Studio* when he discussed the relationship between Modernist architecture and sculpture. He argued 'The Cubist Movement'[47] had created a renaissance of pottery as well as architecture and sculpture and it had a role to play in modern interiors.

> 'The architectural character of contemporary pottery makes a forcible appeal to those who appreciate this renaissance; and since pottery, serene in its sheer form and colour, accords well with modern interiors I foresee an increased use of it to provide points of focus and interest in severely functional rooms.'

From his early association with the Art League of Service Staite Murray had proposed that pottery could be regarded as a link between painting and

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[43] 'International Sculpture, *The Studio*, Vol. XCIX, No. 444, March, 1930, p. 212.
[44] Wilenski, R. H., 'The Meaning of Modern Sculpture', London, *Faber and Faber*, 1932.
[45] see Wilenski p. 234.
[46] Wilenski, 1932, p. 131.
[47] Wilenski, R. H, 'The Place of Sculpture To-Day and Tomorrow', *The Studio*, Vol. CX. No. 511, Oct., 1935, p. 223.

sculpture. Haslam has described [48]how Staite Murray was elected to the Seven & Five Society after being proposed by Ben Nicholson and seconded by Ivor Hitchens, and over the next eight years exhibited with artists such as Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, David Jones and John Piper in its annual exhibitions, until the Society was disbanded in 1935. By the mid 1930s, Staite Murray detached himself from mainstream studio pottery as he had chosen to associate instead with the artistic avant-garde of the Seven & Five Society. As the critical climate was changing from what Harrison described as an 'insular modernism' at the end of the 1920s to a 'measured assimilation of the transformations of European modernism' in the early thirties, Staite Murray was finding himself increasingly isolated. He could no longer rely on the critical support of Read who was becoming a major force in English critical theory. Read's loyalties were spread between his interest in Industrial art and Gropius' ideas from the Bauhaus and supporting artists such as Moore and Nicholson. Haslam describes Staite Murray at this time as being 'on the horns of dilemma'[49] because he was out of step with the emphasis on functionalism in studio pottery and industrial design and 'he was losing touch with the artistic avant-garde.'[50]

As the sole representative of a progressive Modernism in studio pottery, Staite Murray was now isolated from the support structure that maintained the rest of the studio potters. New galleries such as The Little Gallery had opened but the aspirations of Staite Murray and the price of his pots made

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[48] Haslam, 1984, p. 28.
[49] Haslam, 1984, p. 36.
[50] Haslam, 1984, p. 36.

him unsuitable to exhibit even if he had been asked by the owner, Muriel Rose. While this isolated position suited him in a rising market of appreciation, the economic depression and changing art world made it an unfeasible position to maintain. Since Staite Murray had subscribed to what Harrison describes as a 'Modernist notion of progress'[51] it was inevitable that his work would become regarded as reactionary. While the financial strength and security of the art market were able to sustain his peers from the 1920s such as Ben Nicholson, Staite Murray's pottery did not have the recognition to make the transition to the next phase in English art. In many ways, the old pre-war divisions of applied and fine art re-appeared. Ironically, Leach's determination to distance studio pottery from the art world and re-position it as a craft consolidated the old hierarchical divisions that Staite Murray in the first phase of studio pottery temporarily unsettled.

Staite Murray's last solo exhibition was in 1936, the year that Leach returned again from Japan with new ideas for producing pottery that would lead to the making of St Ives Standard Ware and define the next phase of studio pottery. According to Haslam, Staite Murray only took part in three exhibitions during 1938 and 1939 before visiting Rhodesia in 1939, when War broke out. Staite Murray stayed there until 1957 and never worked again, although an exhibition of his pre-war pottery took place at The Leicester Galleries in London in 1958. The Preface written by Maurice Collis touched on Staite Murray's rivalry with Leach and the abstract nature of his

[51] Harrison, 1994, p. 48.

work, claiming that 'studio pottery became a vogue'.[52] The relegation of Staite Murray's pottery from an expression of pure plastic art to a 'vogue' marked the beginning of a revision of the history of studio pottery that has forgotten and devalued the significance of Staite Murray's achievements.

[52] Collis, M., Preface to 'Staite Murray', London, *The Leicester Galleries*, 1958.

Chapter 18

The English Vernacular Revival

Interest in English vernacular pottery continued to gather pace during the 1930s. Fry and Read's critical re-evaluation of mediaeval earthenware had given it an iconic status within Modernist theory with Henry Moore openly referred to as a collector [1]. Leach and Cardew's neo-vernacular slipware continued to popularise the 17th century slipware of Thomas Toft which had now become emblematic of what was considered the 'true' character of English pottery before foreign intervention. Meanwhile, the aesthetic standing of modern industrial ceramics was recovering from the lows of the 19th century after the establishment of the D. I. A. and the influence of the Modern Movement in Europe.

By the mid 1930s critical writing on all modern English ceramics concentrated on four themes: national identity, the influence of early Chinese stoneware, the Modern Movement and the relationship between studio pottery and industry. All these issues were drawn together in the 'Exhibition of English Pottery Old and New'[2] which took place at the V & A in 1935. This was arranged in collaboration with the Council for Art and Industry and included medieval English pottery, early Oriental stonewares,

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[1] Grigson, G., 'In Search of English Pottery', *The Studio*, vol. CX, No. 512, November, 1935, p. 258.

[2] *English Pottery Old and New*, book recording exhibition at the V & A, London, Board of Education, 1936.

studio pottery and historical and contemporary industrial pottery[3]. The premise of the exhibition was that English pottery made over the previous seven hundred years was characterised by an identifiable English idiom which had begun with mediaeval earthenware jugs. Early vernacular English pottery was no longer the concern of Antiquarians, studio potters or Modernist critics, but had become the subject of Government departments and British industry.

This chapter will examination the continuation of the English vernacular pottery revival through the writing of authors such as W. A. Thorpe, Geoffrey Grigson and W. B. Honey, and assess its contribution to studio pottery during the 1930s, particularly in the light of the V & A exhibition. The exhibition will be discussed in Chapter 19 which examines the relationship between the growing Modern Movement, studio pottery and industry.

18.1 'Medieval Pottery at South Kensington'

The decade began with a series of significant exhibitions of English medieval art held throughout London. In its editorial 'Medieval Art at South Kensington'[4] *The Burlington* noted their location at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, the British Museum and a Festival of English Church Art. Although not specifically mentioning pottery the editorial commented 'The

[3] See Appendix for chart of illustrations in *English Pottery Old and New*.
[4] Editorial, 'Medieval Art at South Kensington', *The Burlington*, Vol. LVI, No. CCCVII, June 1930, p. 283.

result of all these activities is immensely to stimulate interest in the study of the whole complex subject.'[5] A further article in *The Burlington* 'Medieval English Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum'[6] adopted a more nationalistic tone and compared this exhibition with one on Italian Art held at the Royal Academy earlier in the year.

> 'There will be a few visitors who will not leave with a feeling that English art, like English literature, has nothing to lose by comparison with that of any other country, ancient or modern.'[7]

The pottery in the V & A's exhibition was reviewed in a nine page article in *Apollo* by W. A. Thorpe, 'Medieval Pottery at South Kensington'[8]. Thorpe's Formalist approach valued refined form, technique and material, characteristics out of sympathy with the rougher qualities of medieval pottery. Despite this, he wrote the most perceptive formal analysis of medieval pottery from the period. He drew an analogy between the negative influence of medieval leather forms ('bombards', 'small mugs' and 'black jacks') on medieval pottery, and the devitalising influence of bronze vessels on Han dynasty pottery.

> 'This mode of manufacture has little in common with pottery, and it lacks the genius of an essential technique. The most frequent shape, an ungainly bag with a bulge in the middle, has slight artistic merit and changed very little in five centuries.'[9]

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[5] Editorial, *The Burlington*, June 1930, p. 283.
[6] Beck, E., 'Medieval English Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum', *The Burlington*, Vol. LVI, No. CCCVII, June 1930.
[7] Beck, 1930, p. 292.
[8] Thorpe, W. A., 'Medieval Pottery at South Kensington', *Apollo*, Vol. XII, No. 71, November, 1930.
[9] Thorpe, November, 1930, p. 336.

Thorpe felt the taller medieval jugs were more successful, as the potter had turned 'bagginess into volume and worked his shape into a single majestic rhythm.'[10] Despite this, he felt most of the forms were 'impressive shapes rather than good potting.' T'ang and Sung dynasty stonewares were the unequivocal critical benchmark for Thorpe and he felt the medieval pots fell short of this standard. He concluded

> 'Nearly all of them showed the vigour and balance of the born shapemaker. But, on the whole, mediaeval pots lack the genius for ceramic form, the wheelmindedness of the Chinese.'[11]

Thorpe's writing bore the legacy of Fry's Formalist ideas more than most but he turned on Fry in this article, quoting from 'The Art Pottery of England'[12] (Fry's seminal review of the 1914 exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Club). Whereas Fry claimed pottery was 'of all the arts most intimately connected with life'[13] Thorpe countered that pottery was not 'exclusively a useful art'[14]. Since 1929 Thorpe had been a strict convert to Read's theory of abstract art and pottery which he applied to counter Fry's views.

> 'Pots follow their habits in eating, drinking, and furnishing, but in themselves they do not carry the sentiments and ideas which are the life of an age. For pottery in its essentials is an abstract art. ... The sentiments and ideas which are the life of an age do not exist in air ; they are attached to people and things, and an artist's suggestions are more limited in so far as he does not represent the facts.'[15]

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[10] Thorpe, November, 1930, p. 337.
[11] Thorpe, November, 1930, p. 339.
[12] Fry, R., 'The Art Pottery of England', *The Burlington*, No CXXXII, Vol. XXIV, March 1914.
[13] Fry, 1914, p. 330.
[14] Thorpe, November, 1930, p. 334.
[15] Thorpe, November, 1930, p. 335.

Thorpe used Read's assertion of the autonomy of aesthetic experience to criticise Fry's views on the social role of English vernacular pottery which Fry had expressed in 'The Art Pottery of England' (as discussed in Chapter 7). Thorpe followed these criticisms of figurative English medieval ceramics, employing Fry's term 'clownish fancies.'[16] Thorpe's article was written sixteen years after Fry had written 'The Art Pottery of England' and abstract art had now become established within the visual arts. This abstract sensibility informed Thorpe's criticism of decoration and he only approved of decorated pots in the exhibition if they contained linear elements 'strictly ceramic in their mode of ornament, avoiding pictorial treatment.'[17]

While relatively moderate in his criticism of historical vernacular pottery, Thorpe was very critical of the neo-vernacular revival. In his article 'English Stoneware Pottery by Miss K. Pleydell-Bouverie and Miss D. K. N. Braden' published in *Artwork* in late 1930s his usual preamble contained a discussion of modern slipware. Thorpe classified English pottery into three tendencies, the Staffordshire or classical tradition of Wedgwood, the pre-Raphaelite phase epitomised by the revivalism of William De Morgan and a modern frugality movement which included pottery of the neo-vernacular revival. In a rare satirical moment, Thorpe portrayed this as a desire to escape from 'civilisation into genteel savagery, to be primitive, and to produce children's books for grown up people.'[18] In 1930 Leach was still attempting to make slipware and Cardew had just successfully established

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[16] Thorpe, November, 1930, p. 335.
[17] Thorpe, November, 1930, p. 338.
[18] Thorpe, Winter 1930, p. 257.

his career. Thorpe refrained from mentioning names but he described these potters as 'true to their art, but at the cost of being false to their age'.[19] As Thorpe felt the relationship between architecture and pottery was vital he claimed this work was unsuitable for modern settings, unlike modern stoneware which he regarded as universal. This repeated Leach's own rejection of earthenware pottery in *A Potter's Outlook* of 1928 - 'it does not fit in with modern life'[20] - in favour of domestic stoneware. Thorpe took issue with the retrogressive nature and affected pastoralism of neo-vernacular pottery and wrote a condemning attack

> '...the noble savage lives again, in cottage interiors with monochrome curtains. So frugalism joins with the little gabled homes that the building societies have cleverly built, and the oaken tea-shops that no one can quite avoid in towns or hope to discover in the country. It rejoices in bare floors and coloured mats and dark polish and earthenware. It looks back to the farmhouse kitchen as it is believed to have been, and strikes the note of that primal grandeur in flats and villas, where people live who have seen cows from cars, and work off their soilhood by toying with a back-garden. The pottery of frugalism is old English slipware; ... It belongs to a civilisation which no longer exists except in vestiges and resurrections.'[21]

This article coincided with Staite Murray's exhibition and the publication of Read's foreword *The Appreciation of Pottery* at Lefevre Galleries in 1930, and was written at the height of interest in stoneware studio pottery and abstraction. It was ironic that Read's theories, launched through English medieval pottery in 1924, had now been turned full circle to fuel criticism of the original pottery which inspired them. By this time Cardew had emerged as the leading potter of the slipware revival, but Thorpe and Leach's

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[19] Thorpe, Winter 1930, p. 257.
[20] Leach, 1928.
[21] Thorpe, Winter 1930, p. 257.

criticism of slipware was the beginning of the end for the first wave of neo-vernacular pottery.

18.2 Press coverage of Early Vernacular Pottery

Commercial dealers and galleries capitalised on the success of 'English Medieval Art' at the V & A and mounted their own private exhibitions of English pottery. The following year *The Burlington* reviewed 'Old English Pottery' at Messrs. C. Andrade Ltd stating 'it is well we should be reminded of the products of our own crafts'[22] and concluded that English pottery deserved 'more attention from the connoisseur than it receives at present.' *Apollo* devoted a full page and two illustrations to the exhibition, commenting 'it is more than likely that English pottery will be viewed with new eyes and a more widespread interest.'[23] The character of the work was seen as 'intensely and characteristically English ... in sentiment and form'. Descriptions of the qualities of the pottery referred to naive art, 'that "expressionistic" quality which modern painters are so earnestly striving for, due rather to the absence than the presence of conscious "art"'. Inevitably, comparisons were drawn with Oriental pottery but the only similarities were surprisingly found in the glazes of the Toby jugs. Later in the 1930s, *Apollo* became more specifically directed at the collector's market.

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[22] Shorter Notices, 'Old English Pottery', *The Burlington*, Vol. LVIII, No. CCCXXXV, February 1931, p98

[23] 'Mr Andrade's Exhibition of Old English Pottery at 24 Hanover Square.; *Apollo*, Vol. XIII, No. 75, March, 1931, p. 201.

As vernacular English Tudor pottery became more widely accepted, features on specific types of work started to appear in the press. The article 'Ringers' Gotchers, Pitchers, Jacks and Jugs' was published by *Apollo* in 1933. This was a survey of inscriptions and the names of church bell ringers found on earthenware jugs from the 16th century. Toft dishes were now well established in Antiquarian circles and the national press and this article reflected a general interest in early English rural life.

By the 1930s a new generation of curators at the V & A had a more objective approach to evaluation and criticism than Read and Rackham. Appointed Keeper of Ceramics in 1936 , W. B. Honey had published his book *English Pottery and Porcelain*[24] in 1933. Honey advocated strict curatorial impartiality and claimed his role was to elucidate pottery 'by history and classification'[25]. He emphatically distanced himself from fashions in contemporary critical writing and the belief in 'one true way' when interpreting ceramics.

> 'Nowhere is the single standard in criticism that seeks a common measure more misguided than in the ceramic art. It implies a single 'ideal pottery' towards which all the diverse types are assumed to aspire. The ideal pottery is, I believe, a linguistic fiction'.[26]

However, Honey's praise of mediaeval pottery and description of its English character followed prevailing conventions. He wrote 'This is the potter's art at its highest'[27] and he regarded the forms as demonstrating 'an indefinable

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[24] Honey, W. B., *English Pottery and Porcelain*, London, A & C Black, 1933.
[25] Honey, 1933, p. 3.
[26] Honey, 1933, p. 2.
[27] Honey, 1933, p. 13.

English idiom'[28]. His opinion of the aesthetic qualities of mediaeval pottery revealed a pre-Modern outlook, for he described the material and workmanship as crude, although he maintained that the decoration revealed 'a masterly feeling for proportion and emphasis of form'[29].

Honey followed Rackham in arguing that 17th slipware was of 'the greatest importance in English ceramic history.'[30] As before, he dismissed foreign critics of this work as 'misguided and absurd' and praised Toft dishes for the 'vitality and freedom of their decoration'.[31] This pottery was included in the chapter 'Slipware and Other Peasant Pottery' in his book, and he attributed a naive virtue to its 'sincerity and freedom from fashionable affectations.'[32] Despite his approval of historical work, Honey dismissed the modern revival of slipware on two counts. He felt modern refined materials were not as aesthetically rich; more significantly, he accused the modern revival work as lacking authenticity.

> 'the sophisticated productions, made for a luxury market, must lack the economic necessity which made the craftsmanship of the old potters so genuine a thing in its day.'[33]

Rackham had cautioned against a neo-vernacular revival in 1921 on the grounds of hygiene; Honey seemed to disapprove on moral grounds and reasons of veracity. Despite his argument for curatorial impartiality, this forthright response to the neo-vernacular revival indicated that

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[28] Honey, 1933, p. 9.
[29] Honey, 1933, p. 11.
[30] Honey, 1933, p. 19.
[31] Honey, 1933, p. 25.
[32] Honey, 1933, p. 32.

institutional support by the V&A, the leading museum of Art and Design, would be less than forthcoming.

Honey was on more secure ground when he wrote about a bequest of pottery in *Apollo*, 'The Wallace Elliot Bequest of English Pottery and Porcelain at the Victoria and Albert Museum'.[34] Since the publication of his book *English Pottery and Porcelain* in 1933, debate about English national identity in ceramics had become a contentious issue between Functionalists such as Grigson[35] and craft traditionalists such as Leach. Honey opened his article with an unequivocal confirmation: 'Mr Wallace Elliot's collection was not only a collection of English wares, but conspicuously an Englishman's collection.'[36] When Honey discussed the Museum's criteria for selecting pieces from this bequest the studied neutrality of 'history and classification'[37] had changed to a concern for aesthetics: 'the specimens were selected in the first place for their merits as works of art, rather than for documentary interest or rarity'.[38]

The decade closed as it had opened, with a large exhibition of medieval art at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1939. With the imminent threat of war, this exhibition was mounted to coincide with a meeting of the International Congress; consequently the title of the exhibition used the term 'British'

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[33] Honey, 1933, p. 32.
[34] Honey, W.B., 'The Wallace Elliot Bequest of English Pottery and Porcelain at the Victoria and Albert Museum' *Apollo*, June, 1938.
[35] see Chapter 20 Studio Pottery and Industry
[36] Honey, 1938, p. 307.
[37] Honey, 1933, p. 3.
[38] Honey, 1938, p. 308.

rather than 'English'. Nikolaus Pevsner's three page review 'An Exhibition of British Medieval Art'[39] in *The Burlington* made no reference to the pottery. Summarising the character of English art he commented on 'that English fondness of "roughing it" that certainly goes back to Shakespeare and may be traceable to a much earlier date'[40] , an attitude at the heart of appreciation of vernacular pottery. Although this exhibition was not on the same scale as the V & A's of 1930, the omission of any reference to pottery suggests that, despite extensive discussion of English vernacular earthenware within the field of ceramics over the previous decade, wider recognition of this genre was not automatic.

After a tentative start, interest in English vernacular pottery after 1914 led to it gaining a secure presence within Antiquarian scholarship and collecting circles as well as Modernist theory and studio pottery by the time of the Second World War. The transformation of opinion about this pottery - which had previously been regarded as crude and technically incompetent - was dramatic. Two of Britain's leading art critics of the 20th century, Roger Fry and Herbert Read, regarded medieval pottery as aesthetically and historically significant, enough to launch Read's theory of abstraction and plastic form. Staffordshire slipware of the 17th century made by Thomas Toft and Ralph Simpson was now acknowledged to represent quintessential English values of strength, simplicity, vigour, and soundness. Four of the first generation studio potters, Reginald Wells, Bernard Leach, Shoji

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[39] Pevsner, N., 'An Exhibition of British Medieval Art', *The Burlington*, Vol. LXXV, No., CDXXXVI, July 1939.
[40] Pevsner, 1939, p13.

Hamada and Michael Cardew took an active part in the neo-vernacular revival and, although they all eventually ceased making slipware, this rustic, vernacular craft has continued to be a part of studio pottery to the present day.

Chapter 19

Studio Pottery and Industry

This chapter examines the relationship between studio pottery and industrial ceramics during the 1930s. While an analysis of the ceramic industry is strictly outside the remit of this thesis, the connection between the two was an important aspect of critical writing at the time. Writing on studio pottery in the inter-war period was affected by developments in critical theory, resulting from the growth of the Modern Movement in England. Reaching a peak during the mid 1930s, this culminated with the critical response to an exhibition of studio, historical and industrial pottery held at the V & A in 1935. The themes of 'English Pottery Old and New' were the subject of heated debate, raising questions about utility, the nature of 'Englishness' and the role of studio pottery as a conduit for the beneficial influence of Oriental ceramics on industry.

As the political situation deteriorated on the continent, a wave of émigrés, including Nikolaus Pevsner and Walter Gropius, brought new European Modernist ideas to England that fed into the critical climate. Derived from the design workshops (the Deutsche Werkstätte and the Deutsche Werkbund) and the Bauhaus in Germany, and projects such as the Weiner Werkstätte in Austria, they challenged the relevance of studio pottery as a useful craft. Another émigré, the potter Lucie Rie (from Austria) established

a studio in London which precipitated a new phase in studio pottery through the ideas of the Modern Movement.

19.1 Survey of the Press

The publication of the Gorell Report in 1932 highlighted the lack of what Nikolaus Pevsner described in his book *An Enquiry into Industrial Art in England* as 'a live Modern Movement in English architecture and industrial art.'[1] *The Burlington* immediately published the editorial 'Art and Industry'[2] in response, supporting this move to improve the quality of design in industry. The editorial reiterated the recommendations of the Gorell Report which were that the public, salesman, retailers and wholesalers should be educated to understand good design and that there should be a national series of exhibitions on industrial art. This editorial was one of the first of a sequence of writings in the art press which were to have implications for studio pottery during the 1930s. The following year *The Studio* published the article 'Rebirth of Design Craftsmanship'[3] by Josef Hoffman which surveyed Austrian design and the 'New Movement'[4]. Hoffman credited Ruskin and Morris with laying the foundations of the New Movement in the 1890s. He wrote that the aims were 'still worth struggling to achieve, at least in all pertaining to the fine and applied arts.'[5]

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[1] Pevsner, N., *An Enquiry into Industrial Art in England*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1937, p. 156.
[2] 'Art and Industry', editorial *The Burlington*, Vol. LXI, No. XXXLII, July, 1932, p. 3.
[3] Hoffman, J., 'Rebirth of Design Craftsmanship', *The Studio*, Vol. CV, No, 481, April, 1933.
[4] Hoffman, 1933, p. 240.
[5] Hoffman, 1933, p. 240.

Hoffman discussed early architecture and the founding of the Wiener Werkstätte.

> 'Above all, the guiding purpose of this development has proved to be the recognition of purpose, that comfort and not representation is the object, that work should be in the spirit of the material employed, that the freedom to create should be without hankering after past styles'.[6]

In 1935 the magazine *Design For To-Day* published an article on the history and importance of Viennese design to the Modern Movement, 'Architecture and Decorative Art in Austria'[7]. Dr. P. W. Born's account of early Functionalist architects such as Otto Wagner (1841-1918) and Adolf Loos (1870-1933) and the Secession included the first reference to Lucie Rie so far found in the English press. It featured an illustration of an earthenware teapot and discussed Rie's place within a group linked to Franz Singer, described as the most severe of Functionalist architects.

> 'Among the craftsmen of this circle are Prof. Robert Obsieger, a real master of pottery-work, and Lucie Rie-Gomperz, a young pottery-worker of fine taste.[8]

While information about the European Modern Movement was filtering into England, Herbert Read had been developing his ideas on industrial art. Read launched his ideas of abstract form through medieval pottery in 1924 and refined them in his Staite Murray catalogue of 1930, but by the mid-1930s he had revised them further. His first major publication of the decade was *The Meaning of Art* of 1931 in which he reprinted 'The Appreciation of

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[6] Hoffman, 1933, p. 244.
[7] Born, P. W., 'Architecture and Decorative Art in Austria', *Design For To-Day*, December, 1935.

Pottery'. The following section indicates the extent of his new ideas about abstraction.

> 'We must not be afraid of this word 'abstract'. All art is primarily abstract. For what is aesthetic experience, deprived of its incidental trappings and associations, but a response of the body and mind of man to invented or isolated harmonies. Art is an escape from chaos. It is movement ordained in numbers ; it is mass confined in measure ; it is the indetermination of matter seeking the economy of life.'[9]

In 1934 *Design For To-Day* published a transcript of a talk that Read gave to the D. I. A. 'The Artist in Modern Civilisation'[10] which reveals the transference of his ideas of abstract art to the task of reforming industry. Read stated that good design was the product of aesthetic sensibility and argued 'All the machine age needs is a fuller recognition of the abstract artist.'[11]

19.2 *Art and Industry*

Read's new ideas on abstraction and his challenging approach to industrial design were fully expressed in *Art and Industry ; The Principles of Industrial Design*[12] published in 1934, a book which went on to inform the design culture of Britain over the next two decades. David Thistlewood has described *Art and Industry* as 'a seminal pre-war study of the Modern

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[8] Born, 1935, p. 469.
[9] Read, 1931, p. 23.
[10] Read, H., 'The Artist in Modern Civilisation', *Design For To-Day*, May 1934.
[11] Read, May 1934, p. 192.
[12] Read, H., *Art and Industry ; The Principles of Industrial Design*, London, Faber & Faber, 1934.

Movement in design'[13] in his essay 'Herbert Read : A New Vision of Art and Industry', (The essay was included in the accompanying publication to the 1993 exhibition 'Herbert Read ; A British Vision of World Art'). Thistlewood catalogues Read's interest in design related issues starting with his 'scholarly histories of ceramics and stained glass'[14] in the 1920s to his connections with Walter Gropius and László Moholy-Nagy of the Bauhaus, Frank Pick of the D. I. A. and Paul Nash who was a member of the Council for Art and Industry. Contemporaneous views of Read's book were equally positive and Pevsner described it in 1937 as the 'The most outstanding book on the subject' because Read stressed 'the fundamental identity of the architect's and the designer's task in the Machine Age.'[15]

In *Art and Industry* Read argued that current design was based on obsolete 'handicraft methods of production'.[16] He proposed a completely different approach which Pevsner described as 'a new philosophical creed'.[17] This was a revolutionary approach, for Read attempted to redefine the nature of aesthetics and argue for the inclusion of the artist in industrial production. He stated his ambition: 'The first step, therefore is to define art; the second is to estimate the capacity of the machine to produce works of art.' Read argued that traditional approaches to designing products for the machine had been limited by 'aesthetic values which are not only irrelevant, but generally

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[13] Thistlewood, D., 'Herbert Read : A New Vision of Art and Industry', *Herbert Read : A British Vision of World Art*, 'eds.' Read, B., Thistlewood, D., Leeds, Leeds City Art Galleries, 1993.
[14] Thistlewood, 1993, p. 95.
[15] Pevsner, 1937, p. 190.
[16] Read, 1934, p. 1.

costly and harmful to efficiency'[18]. Instead, he suggested numerical or pure systems of proportion as the basis for design, implemented by abstract artists placed at the heart of industry, who would instil 'new standards for new methods of production.'

Read's interest in industrial design was not at the expense of aesthetics. Thistlewood argues that Read was wary of Functionalism, as his ideal was a marriage of aesthetics and utility. 'He distrusted functionalism as a generator of *necessarily* beautiful or appealing form.'[19] Although Read referred to both Gropius and Moholy-Nagy in *Art and Industry* Thistlewood claims that Read was more sympathetic to Moholy-Nagy because his ideas were more 'congenial than the strict exactitudes of Gropius's classical aesthetic'[20]. Read wrote in *Art and Industry*

> 'One false theory assumes that if the object in question performs its function in the most efficient way possible, it will ipso facto possess the necessary aesthetic qualities. To this argument we must reply that an object which functions perfectly may, and probably will, posses aesthetic qualities, but that the connection is not a necessary one. Aesthetic values are absolute or universal values to which an object, restricted by its function to a particular form, may approach ; but by very reason of its particularity cannot inevitably assume. In other words, art implies values more various than those determined by practical necessity.'[21]

This reinterpretation of the idea of abstraction had significant implications for studio pottery, in particular for Staite Murray who had absorbed Read's original theoretical ideas in the mid twenties. By the early 30s, studio

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[17] Pevsner, 1937, p. 173.
[18] Read, 1934, p. 1.
[19] Thistlewood, 1993, p. 95.
[20] Thistlewood, 1993, p. 95.

pottery was becoming distanced from Read on two fronts. Staite Murray's ideas of abstraction now seemed anachronistic while Leach's ideas for producing useful pottery looked overly romantic in comparison to Read's utopian and mechanised view of modern life. (In the early 1930s Leach was struggling to establish the prototypes for his Standard Ware, in a project funded by Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst at their estate in Dartington, Devon). Read was now championing a creed built on the 20th century Modern Movement as well as 19th century concepts of industry. He even revised his definition of 'vitality' in favour of the machine, one of the most important criteria in the discussion of all studio pottery, whether made by Leach, Staite Murray or Cardew.

> 'What I want to suggest in this context is that the vitality proper to thrown pots is organic, and the "vitality" proper to cast pots is mechanical. What the cast pot loses in individuality, it gains in precision. Its precision is in the service of a pattern ; the pattern is a human invention—it should be the invention of an artist.'[22]

The individual section on pottery in *Art and Industry* revealed Read's marginalisation of studio pottery as a viable Modernist discipline. He illustrated his theories with a Sung Dynasty stoneware jar, laboratory porcelain, an 18th century English press - moulded teapot and contemporary Dutch pottery. The only individually thrown pottery included was a Bauhaus coffee set designed by Otto Lindig (which could have been used as a prototype for industrial production).

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[21] Read, 1934, p. 2.
[22] Read, 1934, p. 53.

John Gloag, the critic, author and editor of *Design and Everyday Life and Things* (the Design and Industries Association Year Book for 1926-27) also published a book addressing the new ideas of industrial design in 1934. Less analytical and 'lighter reading'[23] than *Art & Industry*, Gloag's views in *Industrial Art Explained*[24] corresponded with Read's. 'Our contemporary obsession with functionalism is at least healthier than [attempts] to improve design in the nineteenth century.'[25] Like Read, he was critical of the craft revival of Ruskin and Morris: 'From its inception, the movement for the revival of handicrafts was influenced by romantic Antiquarianism.'[26] New design initiatives in the British ceramic industry from this period followed the Swedish precedent and called upon artists (instead of studio potters) to design for industry. Gloag reported a project by the ceramic company E. Brain & Co. 'to produce some real contemporary work'[27] by inviting artists to produce designs for tableware. These included 'Frank Brangwyn, Laura Knight, Ernest Proctor, Mrs. Dod Proctor, Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Paul Nash, John Armstrong, Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Allan Walton, Albert Rutherston, Graham Sutherland, John Everett, Milner Gray, Moira Forsyth and Gordon Forsyth.'[28]

This shift of interest towards industrial ceramics was reinforced by Charles Marriot, who unusually devoted a review to Poole Pottery in 1933, the first

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[23] Pevsner, 1937, p. 173.
[24] Gloag, J., *Industrial Art Explained*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1934.
[25] Gloag, 1934, p. 60.
[26] Gloag, 1934. p. 66.
[27] Gloag, 1934. p. 87.
[28] Gloag, 1934. p. 87.

year that he had omitted to review Staite Murray's annual solo exhibition. A consequence of the growing acceptance of industrial design within the art press was that studio pottery began to receive direct criticism. Marriot opened his review 'Poole Pottery'[29] by describing the work

> 'as a praiseworthy effort to improve the design of domestic wares in commercial conditions—a more useful effort, if more limited in artistic opportunity, than the productions of museum pieces.'

Marriot was no longer supporting studio pottery as a model for industry as he had done 1927, when he justified the exclusivity and high prices of studio pottery "museum pieces" because of their "cloistered virtues".[30] Even with this change of heart, Marriot still lagged behind committed Functionalist critics for he praised Poole Pottery for avoiding 'mechanical'[31] qualities in their pots.

19.3 National Exhibitions

Debate surrounding industrial design and nationalist identity provoked a series of major exhibitions during the mid 1930s. Three were held in 1934, at the V&A, the British Museum and most importantly at The Royal Academy, in association with The Royal Society of the Arts. Unlike the series of exhibitions on early English art at the beginning of the decade[32], these examined more recent British history. Now under the editorial control of Herbert Read, *The Burlington* previewed exhibitions of historical

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[29] Marriot, C., 'Poole Pottery', *The Times*, 13 September, 1933.
[30] Marriot, September, 1927.
[31] Marriot, Sept. 1933.

British applied art at the V&A, British Museum and Burlington House, arguing that they redressed the balance of earlier exhibitions which relied on painting, explaining that 'the English genius in some periods found expression in arts of a more useful order'.[33] In the next issue of *The Burlington* an editorial written by Sir Charles Holmes called 'British Art in Industry' reviewed recent changes in attitudes towards handicraft and industry, clearly indicating the re-positioning of studio pottery critically.

Holmes wrote that present attitudes were 'another swing of the aesthetic pendulum'[34] away from Morris' revival of handicrafts, and the belief that 'Only through handicraft did it seem that art could be saved from its former debasement by the machine.' Holmes wrote 'the machine had not, after all, some way of working out its own salvation' concluding 'that what would have seemed like sacrilege in 1924, will now, I fancy, be applauded as a necessary, promising and fascinating experiment.' *Apollo* also previewed the V&A exhibition with the article 'British Art in Industry at Burlington House'[35] which commended the project for 'bringing artists and manufacturers closer together in the interests of efficient co-operation.'[36] However, the exhibition did not live up to expectations and in the next issue of *The Burlington* the editorial, presumably written by Read, condemned it

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[32] see Chapter on 1930s Vernacular pottery
[33] Shorter Notices, 'Exhibitions of British Art at the Museums', *The Burlington*, Vol. LXIV, No, CCCLXXI, February, 1934, p. 95.
[34] Holmes, 1935, p. 3.
[35] Chamot, M., 'British Art in Industry at Burlington House', *Apollo*, January, 1935.
[36] Chamot, 1935, p. 26.

because it 'ignored the essential criteria of modern machine production—namely, simplicity, economy and precision.'[37]

19.4 'English Pottery Old and New'

Much of this discussion surrounding design and industry and national identity focused on studio pottery in the exhibition 'English Pottery Old and New' at the V & A in 1935. An illustrated book of the same title was published the following year. The preface stated that the aim of the exhibition was 'to illustrate modern industrial art in its relation to English traditional styles.'[38] 'English Pottery Old and New' spanned a period of seven hundred years, from medieval earthenware to contemporary industrial design and studio pottery. The work was classified into two groups, the first 'simpler table services and wares for domestic use'[39] and the second 'decorative objects, such as flower-vases and figures and the more elaborate porcelain.' Considering that this was an exhibition devoted to revealing the character of English pottery, the selection of thirteen pieces of antiquarian Chinese, Japanese and Siamese stoneware pottery was surprising.[40]

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[37] 'The Royal Academy Exhibition', *The Burlington*, Vol. LXVI, No. CCCLXXXIII, February, 1935, p. 35.
[38] 'English Pottery Old and New', Cambridge, *The Board of Education*, 1936.
[39] 'English Pottery Old and New' 1936, p. 5.
[40] For a breakdown of the photographic illustrations see Appendix.

The introduction to the book gave a condensed history of English pottery, making only limited reference to individual periods of work. The anonymous author[41] stressed the continuity of an aesthetic character in English ceramics and claimed that the exhibition revealed a 'living tradition maintained in the art from mediaeval times to the present day.' This continuity was explained through a condensed version of the debate surrounding vernacular slipware, industrial ceramics and studio pottery of the previous fifteen years. Although motivated by utility 'rather than any deliberate aim at decorative effect', it was argued that these practical concerns did not compromise the aesthetic qualities of English pottery, as potters used decoration when appropriate. Painting was not regarded as a strength of English ceramics, but when applied it was transformed 'into something peculiar to the English genius' as were various influences from 'Italy or Ancient Greece, from China or Japan'.

This picture of English pottery as consistent and homogenous constituted a new development in ceramic critical writing. As has been already discussed, prior to Fry and Read's Modernist revision of early vernacular pottery mediaeval pottery had been regarded as a crude precursor to the true English pottery of the 18th century. The devaluation of painted decoration in English pottery continued the general trend of the previous two decades when a revolt against 19th century decorative tendencies began. Comments

[41] Most probably written by W. B. Honey. He is credited as selecting, displaying and grouping the pots for photography, although Rackham who was still Keeper is acknowledged as having a consultative role.

on the appropriateness of using various materials had been voiced regarding all types of English pottery. Early Chelsea porcelain was exhibited but excluded from the book since it did not conform to 'Modern economic conditions and the altered standing of painting.'[42]

The author of 'English Pottery Old and New' claimed that this revision of history established an 'English pottery idiom'[43] and described the pre-Wedgwood wares as establishing a tradition built on vitality and a lack of 'pretension to refinement'[44], qualities now shared by modern pottery. Illustrations of mediaeval, Tudor pottery and slipware were mixed with artisanal jugs made by Bourne & Son and Doulton & Co. Historical analogies were made; Dora Billington's painted designs for example were compared to Wedgwood's 18th century cream ware.

The influence of Chinese, Korean and Japanese stonewares on studio pottery was credited with having the same general impact on ceramics as import porcelain had had during the earliest period of Oriental interest. The simplified forms of these Oriental stonewares were seen to correspond with, and have possibly influenced, modern taste.

> 'The austere beauty of the early Chinese ware accords well with modern taste (which it may have helped to create) and its influence can hardly fail to be considerable and beneficial'.[45]

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[42] 'English Pottery Old and New' 1936, p. 7.
[43] 'English Pottery Old and New' 1936, p. 6.
[44] 'English Pottery Old and New' 1936, p. 6.
[45] 'English Pottery Old and New' 1936, p. 8.

It was felt that the stress on form rather than decoration in these Oriental stonewares echoed the character of early English pottery and, significantly, that this had influenced some aspects of contemporary industrial pottery including Harry Trethowan's designs for Poole Pottery and Doulton & Co. 's products.

English Pottery Old and New attempted to argue that all English pottery was determined by an inherent English idiom. The role of studio pottery and critical writing related to it was not acknowledged in the author's explanation of how this idea of an English idiom initially arose. Early vernacular pottery would probably have remained only of interest to Antiquarian collectors had Fry and Read not produced their theories of Formalism and Primitivism which led to the neo-vernacular revival in studio pottery. The machine aesthetic of the Modern Movement was for Read the latest phase of a twenty five year process of European Modernism mediated through English art and design.

The same argument could be made for studio pottery's role in promulgating the influence of early Oriental stonewares. Formalist criticism provided the content and studio pottery realised it. The catalogue essay of *English Pottery Old and New* admitted the possibility that this early stoneware had influenced the course of modern taste and facilitated modern industrial design's incorporation of it into current design. The inclusion of early Oriental stonewares in the exhibition was a testament to studio pottery's central role in popularising Oriental pottery. As Pevsner acknowledged in

1932, industry was still lacking a live Modern Movement. The only area where studio pottery had no claim to have fostered modern industrial design was in the new-found admiration for laboratory porcelain. This was a direct consequence of the Modern Movement's interest in mechanical production as Read had revealed in *Art and Industry*. The praise of laboratory porcelain ('the purely functional forms are by no means without aesthetic interest') was a direct reference to Read's definition of

> '*abstract art*, or non-figurative art, which has no concern beyond making objects whose plastic form appeals to the aesthetic sensibility.'[46]

Marriot reviewed the exhibition in *The Times* because he was interested in studio pottery and industry. His observations reflected the declared themes of the exhibition for he claimed it brought 'out the reality of the native tradition for all its borrowing from the East'[47] and wrote that 'English pottery is generally at its best when it refines upon utility'. Marriot agreed that recent improvements in design were 'a recovery [more] than a departure from tradition.' However, unlike the author of the introduction to *English Pottery Old and New* he felt that the recovery was due to the influence of early Chinese pottery and acknowledged studio pottery as being the first to recognise its importance.

> 'The recovery of [the] movement is largely due to comparatively recent acquaintance with the earlier wares of China, reflected first of all in the work of "studio" potters—such as Mr. Staite Murray, Mr Leach ... . But it is only necessary to look at the recent productions of the Wedgwood firm, to name no other of the commercial exhibitors, to see that the influence has passed into the trade".

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[46] Read, 1934, p. 33.
[47] Marriot, C., 'English Pottery' *The Times*, 15 April, 1935.

A routine review of the exhibition was published in *The Scotsman*[48] by an anonymous London correspondent who simply restated the aims of the exhibition. Studio pottery was described as being a return to 'the simpler pottery idiom of mediaeval and Tudor times' producing 'charming earthenware and stoneware that has a sort of frank and rustic simplicity.'

The most interesting response to the exhibition was an extensively illustrated twelve page article called 'In Search of English Pottery'[49], written by the critic Geoffrey Grigson and published in *The Studio* six months after the exhibition opened. Grigson has been described as a member of 'the "modernist fortress" in London'[50], a group of artists and critics who lived in Hampstead in the 1930s. They included Read, Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, Paul Nash, Ben Nicholson, Naum Gabo, Moholy-Nagy, and Walter Gropius. Grigson's article provides a rare example of ceramic criticism written from the perspective of the Modern Movement and discussed within the context of Bauhaus ideas.

Grigson's conviction of the tenets of the Modern Movement were immediately evident in his cautious endorsement of the idea of Englishness. He accepted the idea that English pottery was represented by a 'graceful earnestness, solidity and plainness'[51] but qualified this by arguing

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[48] 'English Pottery, Old and New'. *The Scotsman*, 15 April, 1935.
[49] Grigson, G., 'In Search of English Pottery', *The Studio*, Vol. CX, No. 512, November, 1935.
[50] Friedman, T., & Thistlewood, D., 'Herbert Read 1893-1968: The Turbulent Years of 'The Pope of Modern Art', *Herbert Read : A British Vision of World Art*, 'eds.' Read, B., Thistlewood, D., Leeds, Leeds City Art Galleries, 1993, p. 152.
[51] Grigson, 1935, p. 256.

that its English character evolved out of circumstances common to all Europeans. Grigson regarded English pottery as romantic instead of classical, and discussed its qualities in terms of natural form. He argued medieval pottery exemplified these characteristics, describing it as having 'a quality of sculpture'[52] and cited the sculptor Henry Moore as being a collector of this work. Grigson's attitude to studio pottery was revealed by his complaint about the inadequacies of modern handles compared with their medieval counterparts. 'On nine out of ten jugs by the modern studio potter ... the handles stick out like incongruous afterthoughts'. This was followed by a sweeping condemnation of contemporary decorative work as 'nearly all bad.' Studio pottery forms were described as 'lacking liveliness, the decoration incongruous to the shapes' and the surface qualities as 'slick'.

> 'Mr Staite Murray, for example, goes as near as anyone could go to making an art out of pastiche, but his "Chinese" stoneware is neither Chinese nor English, and when he starts to decorate his wares, the consequence is often an alarming misfit.[53]

Grigson was equally dismissive of Cardew.

> 'Mr. Michael Cardew, works in the English tradition without seeming to understand it. Set his stone jar against the Fulham jug or fourteenth-century jug, and everything he lacks is obvious ; and had decoration ever had less to do with form.'

Grigson argued that the English tradition was kept alive through the commercial pottery of firms such as Doulton and Joseph Bourne rather than through studio pottery. He believed that craftsman working to their own

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[52] Grigson, 1935, p. 258.
[53] Grigson, 1935, p. 258.

standards instead of following designs had produced pottery that compared with the high standards of the early Oriental stonewares. He stated emphatically the high standard of this work was not from 'pots by Mr. Staite Murray, Mr. Bernard Leach, Miss Pleydell-Bouverie or Mr. Michael Cardew or the contemporary artist-designed wares made by the big potteries.' His highest praise was reserved for a type of laboratory porcelain similar to that used by Read to illustrate his ideas of ideal machine design in *Art and Industry.*

> 'laboratory porcelain, made once more by uninterrupted factory craftsmanship. Porcelain beakers, crucibles, evaporating and crystalizing dishes, lymph receivers, digesters—here in these commercial, unpretentious products were the seemliness of the Wedgwood sauce-boat and cruet and the "functional" elegance of an aeroplane or a house by Corbusier.'

Grigson's views extended Read's concept of the abstract artist producing aesthetically superior industrial design into the realm of Functionalism and with the exception of artisanal industrial pottery, he dismissed all contemporary designed work. Read in contrast had included contemporary Dutch industrial pottery and the individually made work of Otto Lindig. Their ideas did converge however, as Grigson's conclusion argued for a re-evaluation between art and industry based on the theories of Walter Gropius in his book *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus:* 'The studio-potter and the compassionate marriage of easel-artist and craftsman are never going to get us very far.'[54]

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[54] Grigson, 1935, p. 263.

Although he had not been singled out for individual criticism Leach replied to Grigson's attack on studio pottery in the correspondence page of *The Studio*. This was a clash between two opposites: Grigson's extreme Modernism and Leach's craft ideals. Having returned from his extended trip to Japan, Leach was in the process of establishing the production of Standard Ware, and the letter was illustrated with one of his tea sets. Leach's initial response was to agree with Grigson on two counts. First Leach criticised the 'pot for pot's sake methods of studio pottery'[55] and the industrial 'middleman's ideas of our pottery' while he agreed that the 'hope lies with [the] "journey-man potter," and his unalloyed tradition. This was a continuation of ideas he had developed in *A Potter's Outlook*, where he disassociated himself from the collector's cabinet mentality of studio pottery while simultaneously criticising industry. However, he questioned how Grigson was going to implement his idea of encouraging the tradition of English pottery which would give pleasure to 'both mind and body'. Leach offered his experience of the Far East as an answer to the problem, but unlike Grigson positioned the artist in the central role of directing the revival. He wrote

> 'unless the unconscious instinct of tradition is encouraged by the instinctive and conscious leadership of the creative artist's faculty once more in touch with life, we can only hope to arrive at the cold comfort of the marriage of the intellect to the factory.'[56]

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[55] Leach, B., 'A Potter's Reply to Geoffrey Grigson on English Pottery', *The Studio*, Vol. CXI, No. 515, February, 1936, p. 119.
[56] Leach, Feb. 1936, p. 19.

Leach again looked to Japan where the 'unconscious tradition, however fine, is unequal to facing the artistic problems of industrialism' which he regarded as a product of Westernisation. Then, as he been arguing since he returned to Britain in 1920 Leach offered the marriage of East and West and his personal knowledge of both cultures as the solution to the problem.

> 'Only once in a wilderness do we find some signs of some rare mind grasping the two extremes of culture and mating them in an instant of absolute beauty and knowledge. The artist's problem has now become the potter's problem—only genius solves it.'[57]

Leach agreed with Grigson's criticism of studio pottery but his endorsement of journey-man or artisanal pottery was in principle only. Unlike Grigson, Leach did not have confidence in the journey-man potter's ability to appreciate the significance of his own work. Leach acknowledged Grigson's stoneware jugs as 'honest and sensible' but dismissed them for lacking in 'sensitiveness, or quality'. This, according to Leach, was because their making was not controlled by an individual personality.

> 'whereas in old days simple race-genius did the work unknowingly. These two creative forces need to be brought to one focus. It is not enough to perceive that the makers of the Fulham acid jugs have a residue of race genius.'[58]

Leach then raised the critical stakes and dismissed Grigson's comments on mass-production as 'bland' and the product of intellectual reasoning.

> 'It is astonishing that anyone should write as perceptively as he has and yet understand so little the relative capacities of hand and tool and machine. Yet this is a very common mistake of intellectuals to-day, and

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[57] Leach, Feb. 1936, p. 19.
[58] Leach, Feb. 1936, p. 19.

> it comes about usually because modern life does not encourage us to use our hands to express 'seemliness, vitality and solid grace."'

Leach summed up by dismissing all of Grigson's theories relating to design, artisanal pottery, industrial ceramics and studio pottery. Leach had, in 1935, just returned from Japan with plans to set up a production pottery at Dartington. This involved a radical rethink of his own practice and led to his suggestion that potters might work in groups or collaboratively with industry.

> 'Let's recognise our "functionalism" as being incomplete, and our studio potter as being somewhat out of touch with the underlying needs of present life.'

Another letter published in *The Studio* at the same time acted as a postscript to this exchange between Leach and Grigson and revealed the extent of the debate on design and the crafts. The writer complained of the 'altogether excessive amount of space devoted to pottery, glass and decoration, in comparison with that devoted to painting, sculpture, furniture and drawing.'[59] This objection was unnecessary, because after 1936 coverage of studio pottery in the art press went into a rapid decline.

The role of industry and design may have been one of the most charged critical topics of the 1930s but studio pottery was barely involved. Watson states that the potter David Leach attended a Pottery Manager's course at North Staffordshire Technical College in Stoke-on-Trent between 1935 and

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[59] 'A Dual Protest', *The Studio*, Vol. CXI, No. 515, February, 1936, p. 119.

1937 [60] and that Michael Cardew tried to design prototypes at Copelands in Stoke for six weeks in 1938[61]. Apart from this there was very little evidence of studio potters expressing an interest in working with industry. In contrast, the weaver Ethel Mairet actively encouraged closer links between the crafts and industry. In a two part article written with Pevsner, 'Design and the Artist Craftsman' published in *Design for To-Day* in 1935, she wrote 'In England we seem to feel there is an unsurpassable gulf between the artist craftsman and industry. And that is so, as things are now. But this is not the case in other countries.'[62] She referred to collaborations in France and Sweden and advocated training programmes based on Bauhaus models arguing 'The hand workshops of England must be the spearhead of Industry'. In the second part of the article Pevsner equated the historicism of the early Arts and Crafts with English crafts of the 1930s. He argued that it took time before late 19th century crafts developed: 'honesty towards technique but also honesty towards the style of our age. This process is identical with the development from Morris to the Modern Movement.'[63]

Industry was also in large part responsible for the gulf between studio pottery and Stoke-on-Trent. In the article 'The English Pottery Industry'[64] published by *The Studio* in 1936 knowledgeable individuals criticised the intransigence of industry. Gordon Forsyth was quoted as finding the attitudes of the industrialist to design deplorable, since they 'left little room

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[60] Watson, 1993, p. 199.
[61] Watson, 1993, p. 159.
[62] Mairet, E., 'Design and the Artist Craftsman', *Design for To-Day*, June , 1935, p. 227.
[63] Pevsner, N., 'Two' *Design for To-Day*, June , 1935, p. 227.

for the artist'[65]. Harry Trethowan discussed ways of improving the links between industry and the retailer to meet the needs of the 'growing section of the public [who] like good modern design'.[66] In his book *An Inquiry into Industrial Art in England* published in 1937, Pevsner discussed many of these issues. He acknowledged his sympathies towards 'the Modern Movement' in his introduction before surveying English pottery manufacture. His comments were tactful but revealing.

> 'The Bauhaus pots and cups may be less perfect than some of Josiah Wedgwood's, but they express one quality which Wedgwood of necessity could not bestow upon his object—the spirit of the twentieth century.'[67]

The scope of *An Inquiry into Industrial Art in England* was comprehensive and, like much debate in the 1930s which discussed ways of raising of industrial standards of design, included the role of English education. Pevsner's response to Gordon Forsyth, the designer, Principal of Burslem School and regular commentator on studio pottery, was that his 'sympathies in pottery decoration seem to be rather with the development of modern hand-painting'.[68] Pevsner's own views followed the model of the Bauhaus and he stated that in art education 'craft classes must be regarded as laboratories for experimenting with materials and basic processes'.[69]

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[64] Rena, M., 'The English Pottery Industry', *The Studio*, Vol. CXII, No. 524, November 1936.
[65] Rena, 1936, p. 270.
[66] Rena, 1936, p. 274.
[67] Pevsner, 1937, p. 83.
[68] Pevsner, 1937, p. 147.
[69] Pevsner, 1937, p. 221.

A rare attempt to make and exhibit a form of ceramics inspired by the machine aesthetic of the Modern Movement was not well received in the press. An exhibition at the specialist ceramic Brygos Gallery established in 1936, featured a collaboration between a young artist, Ann Potts, and the electrical hard paste porcelain manufacturers, Bullers Ltd. of Stoke. In the foreword to the exhibition Forsyth congratulated the gallery for 'this very interesting experiment'[70], but *Apollo,* the only journal to review the exhibits, was critical. The reviewer commented that 'their impeccable glazes are just a little inhuman'[71] and concluded 'Messrs. Bullers would be better advised to leave "art pottery" to the individual potter and devote their technical precision and experience in mass production to useful china, i. *e.* tea and dinner sets.'

The industrial ethos had become so established in art and design criticism of the 1930s that it even reflected coverage of the Arts and Crafts Society exhibitions. In 1931 *Artwork* commented on how the exhibition at the Royal Academy had seemingly modernised: it 'had suddenly shed all suggestions of a mild and lavender-scented 'art-and-craftiness''[72]. By 1935 the Arts and Crafts Society exhibition at Dorland House in Regent Street (with a significant Swedish exhibition) was felt to have been influenced by industrial aesthetics. In a roundup of London exhibitions *Apollo* wrote that the exhibition seemed to accept the role of the machine, despite the founding aims of the Society.

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[70] Forsyth, G., Foreword to *Hard Paste Porcelain*, London, Brygos Gallery, 1937.
[71] 'The Brygos Gallery, *Apollo*, February, 1937, p. 109.

> 'The Arts and Crafts have decided on co-operation rather than conflict, and while insisting on the value of true craftsmanship do not disdain the many values of industry.'[73]

The review concluded by remarking 'However, "mass production" is still rather winked at than smiled upon.' The following month *Apollo* changed from approving of the machine to warning against the dangers of immoderation.

> 'Yet the chief weakness of the Arts and Crafts Society may be that in its handicrafts it has submitted a little too easily to the dictation of the machine. The straight lines and simple surfaces of modern things are at least in large part, the results of thinking in terms of what can easily be made by the machine.'[74]

Appropriately, the Arts and Crafts Society, the Modern Movement and the role of industry were all brought together by Pevsner in an article celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. In 'Fifty Years of Arts and Crafts'[75] published in *The Studio* Pevsner reviewed the history of the movement and an article written by Bernard Shaw in 1888 was reprinted. Like Hoffman in 1933, Pevsner credited the Society for establishing the precepts of modern design through the writing and designs of its founders and acknowledged the role of *The Studio* in disseminating these ideas. He described Ruskin and Pugin as the early theoreticians but acknowledged Morris for putting into practice the 'contemporary style in architecture and the arts'[76] and establishing the idea that the role of the

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[72] 'A Chronicle of Exhibitions' *Artwork*, Winter, Vol. VII, No. 28, Winter, 1931, p. 290.
[73] 'Art New and Notes', *Apollo*, November, 1935, p. 305.
[74] 'Art New and Notes', *Apollo*, December, 1935, p. 363.
[75] Pevsner, N., 'Fifty Years of Arts and Crafts', *The Studio*, Vol. CXVI, No. 548, November, 1938.
[76] Pevsner, 1938, p. 225.

designer was now just as important as that of the artist. In conclusion, Pevsner summarised the legacy of the Arts and Crafts as well as the arguments which had characterised writing on ceramics during the 1930s, causing so much disagreement between figures such as Grigson and Leach.

> 'Thanks to German initiative mainly, the movement soon expanded into industry far more widely and effectively than had been the case in England. Neither however, would the German Werkbund (with its descendants in Austria, Switzerland, Sweden and England) have been possible, nor would we enjoy now the existence of truly contemporary style in building and industrial design, had it not been for the revolution in thought and deed which was the work of the English Arts and Crafts.'[77]

In their promotion of Functionalist and abstract design, Grigson and Read did not attack just studio pottery but the whole relationship between art and design. The consequence for studio pottery was the critical relegation of the ideas from the 1920s which had established and sustained its place within contemporary art. This had two main effects. Firstly, the validity of early rationales for abstraction which Staite Murray relied upon was questioned. Secondly, Leach's moral justification about transforming studio pottery into a socially useful craft was now undermined by the utopian vision and aestheticised the industrialism of the Modern Movement. The strengths of studio pottery were in danger of eclipse, and the task facing it was either to adapt to the new critical ideas or develop a fresh identity. Chapter 21 will examine how critical writing viewed Bernard Leach's work and documented his changing ideas about the identity of studio pottery during the 1930s.

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[77] Pevsner, 1938, p. 230.

Chapter 20

Press coverage of Early Oriental Pottery

This chapter will examine Antiquarian writing and its beneficial effect on studio pottery through an analysis of articles written by W. A. Thorpe and exhibitions such as the Chinese Exhibition of 1936. *The Burlington* opened the decade, as it had done in the 1920s, by publishing articles by R. L. Hobson, 'Corean Pottery—I. The Silla Period'[1] and 'Corean Pottery—II, The Koryu Period'[2]. These thorough articles continued *The Burlington's* policy of publishing new scholarly research for their increasingly knowledgeable readership. This growing expertise was in marked contrast to the situation earlier in the century, as Rackham observed when he described Korean pottery as 'a subject on which the vaguest and most absurd notions were current, until 1916.'[3] Since the 1920s, *Mingei* potters such as Kawai had appreciated the aesthetic qualities of Korean pottery and its selflessness, as an article in *The Studio* in 1925[4] revealed. After Herbert Read took over its editorialship in 1933, *The Burlington* continued to provide coverage on obscure forms of Oriental pottery with further articles such as 'The Ceramic

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[1] Hobson, R. L., 'Corean Pottery–I. The Silla Period, *The Burlington*, Vol. LVI, No. CCCXXIV, March, 1930.
[2] Hobson, R. L., 'Corean Pottery–II. The Koryu Period, *The Burlington*, Vol. LVI, No. CCCXXIV, March, 1930.
[3] Rackham, 1962, p. 11.
[4] Harada, J., 'Old Corean Pottery', *The Studio*, Vol. 90, Sept. 1925.

Wares of North-Central Siam' in 1933[5] and 'Yueh Ware of the "Nine Rocks" Kiln' in 1938 [6].

The collectors' market was important to all magazines, and *Apollo* was not alone in appealing to its audience by complimenting them on their connoisseurship and good taste. In the article 'Chinese Pottery and Porcelain in the collection of Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark'[7] of 1933 the dealer Edgar Bluett[8] commented on 'the progress of knowledge as well as the aesthetic tendency of the collector to-day.'[9] Eumorfopoulos was still the most important collector of the period as the series of eleven articles written by Hobson during the 1920s had demonstrated. When his collection came up for sale, *The Burlington* reported that museums would be 'setting aside during the next few years nearly the whole of such grants as may be made to them by Parliament.'[10] The following month *The Burlington* published an editorial on 'The Eumorfopoulos Collection'[11] and discussed the 2,500 hundred objects from his collection in an exhibition at the V & A. *Apollo* published a ten page article 'The Eumorfopoulos Collection'[12] the ceramics section written by the V & A curator W. B. Honey. Honey speculated

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[5] Le May, R., 'The Ceramic Wares of North-Central Siam—1' *The Burlington*, Vol. lLXIII, No. CCCLXVII, October, 1933.
[6]Brankston, A. D., 'Yüeh Ware of the "Nine Rocks" Kiln', *The Burlington*, Vol. LXXIII, No. CDXXIX, December, 1938.
[7] Bluett, E., 'Chinese Pottery and Porcelain in the collection of Mr & Mrs Alfred Clark', *Apollo*, Vol. XVIII, No. 105, September, 1933.
[8] presumably the dealer from Bluett Galleries.
Bluett, 1933, p. 164.
[10] Winkworth, W., 'The Eumorfopoulos Collection', *The Burlington*, Vol. LXVI, No. CCCLXXXV, April, 1935, p. 188.
[11] 'The Eumorfopoulos Collection' editorial *The Burlington* , Vol. LXVIII, No. CCCLXXXXVIII, May, 1936, p. 207.
[12] Honey, W. B., 'The Eumorfopoulos Collection ; I. Ceramics', *Apollo*, Vol. XXIV, No. 139, July, 1936.

whether early Chinese ceramics had helped to establish modern taste in ceramics, although he chose to compare some Han figures with 'the modern work of a Gaudier or a Skeaping'[13] rather than the work of a studio potter.

Exhibitions of Chinese art were not limited to public showings of prominent collections and the press continued to review commercial galleries throughout the 1930s. These were mainly covered by *The Burlington* which in 1930 stated 'Evidently there is no decline of interest in the material products of Chinese Civilisation'[14], going on to discuss two commercial exhibitions. The study of Chinese culture was now making inroads into academia. Alongside a review of Sung pottery later in the year, *The Burlington* reported the appointment of W. P. Yetts as a lecturer in Chinese art and archaeology at the School of Oriental Studies and argued that a 'more systematic and thorough teaching of this subject in England has long been required.'[15]

Interest in Oriental art had grown to such an extent that the Burlington published an editorial entitled 'An Asiatic Museum?'[16] which discussed calls for a new museum to house all of the country's Far Eastern art. The editorial argued 'A close examination of the question convinces us that our museums are not keeping pace with the progress of recent research'.

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[13] Honey, 1936, p. 5.
[14] Shorter Notices, 'Two Exhibitions of Chinese Art', *The Burlington*, Vol. LVII, No. CCCXXVIII. July, 1930, p. 38.
[15]Shorter Notices, "Mr W. P. Yetts and the School of Oriental Studies', *The Burlington*, Vol. LVII, No. CCCXXII, November 1930, p. 236
[16] 'An Asiatic Museum?', editorial in *The Burlington* , Vol. LVIII, No. CCCXXXVI, March 1931.

Coverage of early Chinese ceramics was not always limited to scholarly concerns and *Homes and Gardens* published a feature which revealed the extent of the impact that the simple forms and sober colours of T'ang and Sung dynasty pottery had made on public taste. In a feature 'Modernism in an Old House' of 1932 the writer stated 'It is a restful room because it is a finished room ... I wondered if this feeling of finish were due to the Regency fire- basket ... or to the perfection of Chinese painting over the mantelpiece, and the Chinese pottery in the niches.'[17] This article helps to explain commercial interest in early Chinese pottery. A review of an exhibition by *The Burlington* in 1934 remarked that 'The exhibition of early Chinese pottery held at Messrs. Bluett and Sons ... was confined almost entirely to pieces with the single-coloured glazes made in such perfection under the Sung and succeeding Yüan Dynasties.'[18]

The growth of Antiquarian and public interest in early Chinese pottery was matched by the increasing desire of museums to acquire other forms of Oriental art. In 1930 *The Burlington* revealed the extent of international interest by reviewing an exhibition in America at the Cleveland Museum of Art which it claimed 'was by far the most important affair of the sort that has taken place in America in recent years.'[19] This exhibition was notable for containing the French dealer Kelkekian's collection. Roger Fry commended Kelkekian in 1920 for helping to establish Modernist aesthetics through his

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[17] Modernism in an Old House, Homes and Gardens, May 1932, p 549
[18] Shorter Notices, 'Old Chinese Pottery and Porcelain at Bluett's', *The Burlington*, Vol. LXIV, April, 1934, p. 187.
[19] Warner, L., 'A Chinese Exhibition at Cleveland Museum of Art', *The Burlington*, Vol. LVI, No. CCCXXV, April, 1930, p. 205.

sensitivity to primitive art, Oriental pottery and modern French painting. He wrote 'how illuminating to both the confrontation was.'[20] *The Burlington* review of 1930 revealed the importance of dealers in setting public taste, through museum acquisitions 'The valuable lesson ... [was] the prompt action in making purchases from among the objects lent by dealers.' Basil Gray also discussed the role of dealers in his essay 'The Importance of Taste In Chinese Art in The West 1872 to 1972' quoting a French critic who discussed the importance of a particular dealer in encouraging interest in early Oriental art 'Charles Vignier did more than anyone to reveal to us the arts of Asia and especially of China'.[21]

20.1 The Exhibition of Chinese Art at Burlington House 1936

Interest in Chinese art peaked in 1936 with the exhibition of Chinese art at the Burlington House. This provoked a spate of related articles in the press launched by two previews 'The Exhibition of Chinese Art ; A Preliminary Survey'[22] by Sir Percival David[23] and 'On the Origin and Development of Chinese Art'[24]. After twenty years of unprecedented interest in early pottery, other forms of Chinese art, notably bronze and jade, had now become fashionable, as Gray noted when he wrote 'an interest in these arts became

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[20] Fry, 1920, p. 304.
[21] Gray, 1973, p. 28.
[22] Percival David, Sir, 'The Exhibition of Chinese Art ; A Preliminary Survey', *The Burlington*, Vol. LXVII, No. 393, December, 1935.
[23] Percival David later donated his extensive collection of Chinese art to the University of London.
[24] Bachhofer, L., 'Origin and Development of Chinese Art', *The Burlington*, Vol. LXVII, No. 393, December, 1935.

prominent, if not predominant, in the 1930s.'[25] *The Studio* published a general article on the exhibition 'An Appreciation of Chinese Art'[26] but it was the established curators Hobson and Rackham who wrote the specialist articles on ceramics. With typically measured pace Hobson discussed the attribution of newly discovered kilns. He also explained that the now highly fashionable Sung work had been in continuous ownership by Chinese connoisseurs for the last thousand years. He described the pottery

> 'as for the most part not buried goods. They have been carefully preserved and cherished by generations of collector-owners and they are true representatives of the potter's art at its best.[27]

In more ebullient tones Rackham speculated on the place of the potter in Chinese culture writing it was 'generally little if at all inferior to that of painting, architecture and sculpture'.[28] He was enthusiastic towards most of the ceramics displayed and saw a lyrical quality in the Sung pottery 'an acute sensibility for sheer beauty of material alike in colour and in surface texture and for subtleties of graceful form'.[29] This was possibly the last article Rackham published in the general press before he retired in 1938. In contrast to his writing on specific studio potters such as Staite Murray and Reginald Wells in the 1920s, Rackham only published articles on ceramic work from general exhibitions at Burlington House during the 1930s. These

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[25] Gray, 1973, p. 35.
[26] Sheringham, G., 'An Appreciation of Chinese Art, *The Studio*, Vol. CXI, No. 514, January, 1936.
[27] Hobson, R. L., 'The Exhibition of Chinese Art : I.—The Ceramics' *The Burlington*, Vol. LXVIII, No. 394, January, 1936, p. 3.
[28] Rackham, B., 'A Survey of Ceramics in the Exhibition of Chinese art at Burlington House', *Apollo*, January, 1936, p. 3.
[29] Rackham, 1936, p. 6.

included his specialist subject 'III—Maiolica'[30] from an exhibition of Italian art in 1930 and Islamic ceramics 'V—Pottery'[31] in 1931.

The Chinese exhibition of 1936 prompted a flurry of commercial exhibitions in independent galleries. Amongst a series of reviews in 1936 *The Burlington* commented on how 'Chinese Art in all its forms is of particular interest to us at this moment'[32]. *Apollo* also included many reviews during this period and at the start of its general review section in February stated

> 'Whether it be possible to understand Chinese art or no, the British public, like Oliver Twist, seems to be clamouring for more, and the art galleries are doing their best to supply the demand.'[33]

In 1938 Chinese pottery was still fashionable as *The Burlington* reported in a review of a commercial exhibition 'Ceramics, most in demand among collectors, were suitably numerous and diverse.'[34] Japanese pottery, which was not as popular as Chinese ceramics, only managed one very general article amongst *Apollo, The Studio* and *The Burlington* during the 1930s. 'An Introduction to the Study of Japanese Pottery and Porcelain'[35] stated 'It is remarkable how neglected, almost despised, is Japanese pottery'.[36] Despite Leach's return from his tour of Japan in 1936 (complete with peasant handicrafts) Japanese pottery probably received so little coverage because,

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[30] Rackham, R., 'III—Maiolica', *The Burlington*, Vol. LVI, No. CCCXXII, January, 1930.
[31] Rackham, R., 'V—Pottery', *The Burlington*, Vol. LVIII, No. CCCXXXIV, January, 1931.
[32] Shorter Notices, 'An Exhibition of Chinese Art', *The Burlington*, Vol. LXVIII, No. 394, January, 1936, p. 50.
[33] J. G., 'Art News and Notes', *Apollo*, February, 1936, p. 113.
[34] Shorter Notices, 'Chinese Exhibition at Messrs. Sparkes', *The Burlington*, Vol. LXXII, No. CDXXIII, June, 1938, p. 308.
[35] Peer Groves, W., 'An Introduction to the Study of Japanese Pottery and Porcelain', *Apollo*, December, 1937.
[36] Peer Groves, December, 1937.

apart from the institutional and commercial investment in Chinese ceramics, the threat of war increased. The last significant event in the early 20th century discovery of early Chinese pottery was an exhibition held at the V & A in 1939. 'Chinese Art at South Kensington'[37] published in *The Burlington* reported on how the whole of the V&A's Chinese collection was put on display in the North Court of the Museum, with the Eumorfopoulos collection as the nucleus. It called again for an Oriental Museum.

20.2 W. A. Thorpe

After his first two intriguing articles 'Form in Pottery'[38] in 1926 and 'The Rutherston Collection at South Kensington'[39] in 1929, W. A. Thorpe published a third article on pottery in 1930, 'English Stoneware Pottery by Miss K. Pleydell-Bouverie and Miss D. K. N. Braden'.[40] This was typically broad ranging and covered issues beyond the two studio potters. His views on the influence of Chinese ceramics on English studio pottery will be examined in this section while his critical assessment of Pleydell-Bouverie and Braden will be discussed in Chapter 21.

Thorpe was one of the few critics who discussed studio pottery in relationship to architecture. Continuing his approach established in 'Form in Pottery' Thorpe stated 'Pottery, like sculpture, is related to architecture ; it

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[37] Shorter Notices, 'Chinese Art at South Kensington', *The Burlington*, Vol. LXXIV, No. CDXXXIII, April, 1939, p. 196
[38] Thorpe, 1926.
[39] Thorpe, 1929.

is the servant of the interior as well as being its own master.'[41] He argued that early Chinese pottery was universal and, unlike Staffordshire pottery or slipware, it would 'answer to any interior.' The recent discovery of Tang and Sung pottery was at the core of Thorpe's reasoning, as he believed that this work re-defined Chinese ceramics, from a pictorial idiom of painted vessels, to integrated works of art. Like many Modernist critics, Thorpe felt form was an absolute canon and he argued that painted decoration destroyed a sense of volume which he felt was the main element of form. 'In the end pictorial ornament is the enemy of ceramic art, for it tends to mask volume rather than reveal it.'[42]

While many writers fell into either the Antiquarian or Contemporary camp in their critical writing on pottery, Thorpe managed to combined both. He developed the analytical study of pottery that he had begun in his article on The Rutherston collection in 1929 into the most coherent formal analysis of the inter-war period. Thorpe established four criteria: Body, Form, Glaze and Ornament, plus many sub-categories, as a basis for his appreciation of modern and historic pottery. In his formal analysis of painted ceramics he claimed that the ground of a pot was not like a canvas but was 'infinite, in that it comes back on itself like a circle', and he proposed that ornament on pottery was 'a design in time rather than a design in space.'[43]

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[40] Thorpe, W. A., 'English Stoneware Pottery by Miss K. Pleydell-Bouverie and Miss D. K. N. Braden'[40] *Artwork*, Winter 1930.
[41] Thorpe, 1930, p. 257.
[42] Thorpe, 1930, p. 259.
[43] Thorpe, 1930, p. 259.

Sung pottery represented the height of ceramic achievement for Thorpe: 'Sung has made itself the standard of good potting' . He reported a claim that 'It is said that a man cannot paint who has not studied the Italians; no more can a potter pot who is unversed in Sung'[44]. Five years before the exhibition 'English Pottery Old and New' at the V & A he raised the possibility that studio pottery acted as a conduit for the Oriental influence on modern industrial design because it had re-discovered the character of Chinese pottery.

> "Mr Bernard Leach, the Vyses, Mr Staite Murray and their school, [were] the most important addition to English ceramic art since Wedgwood'

Thorpe regarded Tang and Sung pottery as representing 'the real canons of ceramic appeal' and its re-discovery had 'brought back pottery to a region which I shall dare to describe as fine art.'

Thorpe's next article 'The One Operation; A Note on T'ang Pottery'[45] published in 1932 continued to reveal how interpretations of historic Chinese pottery were shaped by contemporary attitudes. He opened with a cautionary reminder of past intolerance to the early Chinese stonewares 'An exotic art never quite gets a fair chance. Opinions of it are formed in the heat of discovery, and are so little affected by later information that they become inveterate.'[46] This appraisal of Tang pottery placed it within the literary culture of early China. He wrote 'It carried pottery out of the

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[44] Thorpe, 1930, p. 258.
[45] Thorpe, W. A., 'The One Operation : A Note on T'ang Pottery'. *Apollo*, August, 1932.
[46] Thorpe, 1932, p. 53.

common uses of the people, in which it had its origin, into the critical esteem of a literate aristocracy.'[47] It is tempting to read this as a metaphor for the value Thorpe placed on studio pottery and a reflection of its rise in critical recognition. His description of the way that a Tang cup was appreciated for qualities beyond utility also invites wider comparison: 'it is clear that at T'ang symposia the cup was not a mere receptacle, but selected and admired for its merits.' Thorpe was very aware of the gulf between modern perceptions and the richness of the Chinese culture which had been responsible for producing this pottery. In a frank acceptance of the inaccessibility of T'ang culture he acknowledged the impossibility of fully understanding the symbolism and subtleties of its pottery, arguing that Formal appraisal was the only realistic means left. He wrote T'ang pottery was

> 'lacking a content in human experience it is free for better or worse, from the corollary of pathos. ... There is no embodiment of ideas, no flavour of sentiment or belief, no demand therefore that should crane our sympathy. We are outside the emotions of peculiar people, with their roots in an alien geology, their occasions in a different society, their hints of myths and archives which we do not understand. We have got rid of the passion which makes an art exotic for us, and are left with a technique and a species of sensibility. In pottery the taste of a race is expressed in a language of form which is intelligible to everyone.'[48]

Despite his respect for Chinese culture, Thorpe's attitudes to historic pottery avoided the growing differences between Staite Murray and Leach. Like Leach, Thorpe argued for standards in studio pottery to be based on early Chinese pottery, but did not respond to Leach's moral arguments for utility

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[47] Thorpe, 1932, p. 54.
[48] Thorpe, 1932, p. 54.

and the social value of pottery. Thorpe was interested in the formal possibilities of ceramics and proposed that T'ang potters had established a set of values which were plastic in their nature and that 'pottery became for the first time an essential art, to be judged by no standards but its own, but claiming attention by the side of writing and painting and poetry. '[49] Thorpe pushed the rigours of Formalism and the pot for pot's sake view into the realm of religious discussion.

> 'The Chinese were not pre-eminently a sculptural race ; but as sculpture became the plastic art of the Buddhist religion, pottery became the plastic art of a courtly paganism.'[50]

Thorpe emerged at the time when Read had stopped writing on matters directly related to studio pottery. Read wrote only four articles, but each broke new critical ground in establishing connections between historic work and contemporary theory. Read's critical originality and insight was only matched by Fry's, but with the virtual absence of any writing by Fry and Read on studio pottery during the early 30s, it was Thorpe who applied their ideas. His breadth of historical and contemporary interest enabled him to articulate a wider context for studio pottery, while his analytical skills defined the elements of pottery within a Formalist context for the first time. Fry and Read were instrumental in defining the theoretical basis for modern studio pottery, but Thorpe's Formalist writing put it into practice.

While the standard of critical writing in studio pottery was declining during the mid 1930s, it was coincidental that another insightful analysis of T'ang

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[49] Thorpe, 1932, p. 56.

century Europe. In a post-script he acknowledged Leach and his close friend and collector, Henry Bergen, 'for some valuable suggestions and many stimulating criticisms', a rare public acknowledgement of critical contact between critics and potters.

By the end of the 1930s coverage of early Chinese pottery, as with all other forms of Chinese art, was so ingrained within public recognition that the press and Antiquarian groups were now reflecting on the intricacies of its historical development. In a report on the latest meeting of the Oriental Ceramic Society in 1938 *The Burlington* discussed a paper given by R. L. Hobson who reviewed the progress of Chinese studies over the previous forty years.

> 'He contrasted the public and private collections of 1898 with those of to-day and showed how the increase of knowledge and the growth of our collections have advanced'.[52]

This last period of peace before the war was a period of transition for studio pottery. Reginald Wells had long fallen away from public view, Staite Murray had not had a major exhibition for the last two years and the Vyses had established a solid but limited reputation and stopped emulating Sung glazes. A younger group of studio potters, mainly Leach's students, had established themselves in making stoneware pottery and the next generation of potters such as Sam Haile and Margaret Rey were now emerging. If 1923 is taken as the symbolic date of studio pottery's launch,

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[51] Bachhofer, L., 'Characteristics of T'ang and Sung Pottery' *The Burlington*, Vol. LXV, No. CCCLXXVII, August 1934.

with Hamada's two exhibitions at Paterson's Gallery, the movement was now fifteen years old. Twenty eight years had passed since the 1910 exhibition of early Chinese pottery at Burlington and Roger Fry's review of the Sung bowl in *The Nation*. Most Chinese pottery was now familiar to the interested English public, from Neolithic funerary jars to the first glazed stonewares of Han dynasty, to the *famille rose* porcelains of the 18th century. T'ang and in particular Sung pottery, was now so celebrated that it was comfortably featured in the pages of *Homes and Gardens* and the review section of the broadsheet press. It was revered by Antiquarian scholars and Modernist critics who offered it as examples of sublime form for the machine age. Chinese pottery, and studio pottery by implication, far from being an esoteric discipline was in the conscious mind of the general public. As the last of the remaining English studio potters from the early 1920s, Leach was ideally placed to realise the potential of this interest. Above all the other studio potters he had always linked his career to and promoted early Oriental pottery. Chapter 21 will examine Leach's career and writing in the 1930s and discuss the evolution of his Standard Ware and the consolidation of his 'Sung Standard'.

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[52] Shorter Notices, 'The Oriental Ceramic Society, *The Burlington*, Vol. LXXIII, No. CDXXVIII, November, 1938, p. 227.

Chapter 21

The Leach School

This Chapter will examine critical writing about Bernard Leach and the studio potters closely associated with his work and beliefs. By 1930 this number included the first generation of students who trained with Leach at St Ives. Michael Cardew, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie and Nora Braden set up their own potteries in the mid 1920s, but continued to benefit from association with him and this loose coalition formed the beginning of the Leach school.

Leach's relationship with Japan continued to be of importance to his career during the 1930s. Like Hamada in the 1920s, Kenkichi Tomimoto visited England, reinforcing the link between East and West that was central to Leach and the Mingei view of pottery. Tomimoto ostensibly provided another model of authentic Oriental culture and his visit enabled Leach to extend his range of their ideas and write about Japanese pottery for the English public. Leach published two articles to coincide with his joint exhibition with Tomimoto at the Beaux Arts Gallery in 1931 while in the same year Yanagi wrote the catalogue essay for Hamada's solo exhibition at Paterson's Gallery.

21.1 Leach, Tomimoto and Hamada

Leach's first exhibition of the 1930s at The New Handworker's Gallery consisted of stoneware tea and coffee sets and related domestic pottery. In *The Times,* Charles Marriot discussed the work within the context of Leach's revised ideas on studio pottery which had been first expressed in *A Potter's Outlook.* Marriot referred to the 'old story' about 'the gulf '[1](Leach's term) between studio pottery and industry, which he regarded as of fundamental importance. In contrast to his growing concerns with Staite Murray, Marriot described Leach's attempts at making 'household pottery' as inspiring 'confidence by facing facts and conditions.' He judged the work as 'meeting the requirements of urban life' which included painted fireplaces made from 'semi-mechanical' or industrial bisque blank tiles.

In 1931 Leach had a two - person exhibition with his Japanese potter friend Kenkichi Tomimoto at Beaux Arts Gallery. Leach had exhibited there in 1928, exhibiting what Marriot had at the time been content to call 'museum pieces'[2] while simultaneously showing domestic pottery at The New Handworkers Gallery and also publishing *A Potter's Outlook.* Following Hamada and Kawai's exhibitions of 1929, Tomimoto's completed a triumvirate of English exhibitions by Japanese potters who were central to the Mingei or folk art movement headed by Yanagi. Leach publicised the joint exhibition by writing a brief catalogue essay and two advance articles in *The Studio* and *Apollo.* Factual in tone, the catalogue essay reinforced

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[1] Marriot, C., 'Stoneware Pottery', *The Times,* 31 March, 1930.

Leach's Japanese credentials concluding 'This dual exhibition of our work is held in memory of the ten years in Tokyo during which we worked and exhibited together in friendly rivalry.'[3]

Leach pitched his articles for *Apollo* and *The Studio* differently, perhaps adjusting each to the magazine readership. The *Apollo* feature 'Kenkichi Tomimoto's Stoneware'[4] described how Tomimoto 'kept aloof from the currents and movements of contemporary art'[5] and discussed his craftsmanship and calligraphy which Leach praised as vigorous and austere. The parallels between Tomimoto and Leach's approach to potting meant that Leach could speak for both when discussing, for example, the use of materials 'direct from nature' with their rich aesthetic qualities. Ever since the publication of *A Potter's Outlook* Leach had attacked studio pottery that had aspirations towards fine art, and rejected the practice of creating work for the collector's market in favour of the more socially laudable production of utilitarian pottery. Leach now amended his stringent views and, aligning himself with Tomimoto, wrote that the studio potter had to 'find some way of making not only collector's precious pieces, but also household articles at a comparatively low cost.'[6]

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[2] Marriot, C., 'Mr. Bernard leach, *The Times*, December 6, 1928.
[3] Leach, foreword to 'Kenkichi Tomimoto and Bernard Leach', London, *Beaux Arts Gallery*, May, 1931.
[4] Leach, B., 'Kenkichi Tomimoto's Stoneware', *Apollo*, Vol. XIII, No. 77, May, 1931.
[5] Leach, *Apollo*, May, 1931, p. 305.
[6] Leach, *Apollo*, May, 1931, p. 305.

In contrast, Leach's article for *The Studio* 'Leach and Tomimoto West and East'[7] was more discursive. Structured in two parts to reflect each potter, Leach used his own section to comment on the poverty of appreciation for pottery in the West, compared with that of the East. He presented the Japanese tea ceremony as an ideal model for 'a priesthood of art'[8]

> 'the conscious focus of those little "Tea Room" gatherings of aesthetes where the classic standards of art were evolved...formed the canon for the whole country.[9]

In a rare reference to modern developments, Leach discussed the influence of Japanese art on Morris, the French Impressionists, Cézanne and Van Gogh but claimed that the West had failed to understand true Japanese beauty, writing of the dangers of 'conscious aestheticism' and 'conservative formalism'[10].

> 'we have stopped short, we have not consciously plumbed the depths. 'How many men in England have grasped at the roots of Japanese standards or beauty?'[11]

In the second part of the article Leach described Tomimoto as the 'greatest brush-work master since the end of the Ming Dynasty'. What began as a biography of the Japanese potter evolved into an autobiographical account of Leach's own time in Japan, ignoring Tomimoto's pots. The account was notable for containing Leach's only reference to the abstract qualities of pottery: 'I had not long been launched upon this quest for beauty of clay, of

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[7] Leach, B., 'Leach and Tomimoto West and East', *The Studio*, Vol. CI, No. 458, May, 1931.
[8] Leach, *The Studio*, May, 1931, p. 346.
[9] Leach, *The Studio*, May, 1931, p. 346.
[10] Leach, *The Studio*, May, 1931, p. 347.
[11] Leach, *The Studio*, May, 1931, p. 347.

abstract form, of evocative pattern'.[12] Auto-biographical details prevailed and Leach related how he had encouraged Tomimoto to take up ceramics, built his first kiln and started their joint apprenticeship with the sixth Kenzan. He presented himself and Tomimoto as intellectual pioneers of Japanese pottery working alone against the onset of industrialisation. Leach wrote of the 'sense of isolation we each experienced in different ways in a busy world of handicraft turning towards machine craft.' This stance was predicated on their self-awareness and modernity in contrast to the instinctive, traditional peasant potter.

> 'we are both of the modern world and its consciousness, individualism, and width of outlook are very alien to the background of traditional craft to which Kenzan belonged.'[13]

Just as he would later dismiss industrial English artisanal potters in his response to an article by Geoffrey Grigson[14], so Leach presented the artist potter as the route to reviving traditional craft pottery in Japan. Although Leach undoubtedly played an important role in the *Mingei* movement, helping to inspire a younger generation of Japanese potters, he used the article on Tomimoto to give himself credit for the Japanese revival by learning the 'old ways'[15] from his master the sixth Kenzan. Leach also reminded *The Studio* reader of his relationship to Hamada.

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[12] Leach, *The Studio*, May, 1931, p. 348. This passing reference was made a few months after Read published his essay *Appreciation of Pottery* in Staite Murray's catalogue at Lefevre Galleries.
[13] Leach, *The Studio*, May, 1931, p. 349.
[14] see Chapter 19
[15] Leach, *The Studio*, May, 1931, p. 349.

> 'There were no others in the field until 1919 when Hamada came as a student and visited my kilns near Tokio and asked me to take him over to England as my assistant.'[16]

Leach's article revealed little about Tomimoto's work, ideas or importance in Japan. Tomimoto had in fact trained as an architect and Watanabe and Kikuchi credit him as an important source in taking Morris's ideas to Japan after he visited England in 1910[17]. He was a founding member of the *Mingei* movement in Japan and, with Yanagi, Hamada and Kawai published *Nihon Mingei Bijutsukan Setsuritsu Shuisho*[18] in 1926 while Leach was in England. Although this was Tomimoto's first exhibition in England, Leach made it serve his own needs, just as he had done with Hamada and Kawai in 1929.

Marriot was the only critic to review the exhibition. His opening remarks revealed his perennial difficulties in writing about studio pottery and increasing disaffection with the movement. 'Pottery exhibitions are always difficult to describe because—except in artistic quality ... one pot is very much like another'.[19] However, Marriot found the comparison between Eastern and Western pottery interesting. He viewed Tomimoto's work as superior to Leach's in technique and quality of painted decoration - 'something to wonder at' - and because his work looked 'more "professional"'. Marriot preferred Leach's pottery however on the grounds

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[16] Leach, *The Studio*, May, 1931, p. 349.
[17] Watanabe & Kikuchi, 1997, p. 380.
[18] translated as A Proposal for the Establishment of Hihon Mingie Ken (the Japan folk Crafts Museum) Watanabe & Kikuchi, 1997. p. 381.
[19] Marriot, C., 'Beaux Arts Gallery', *The Times*, 12 May, 1931.

of 'personal taste' , describing the work as a combination of Oriental and native pottery.

Yanagi wrote the catalogue essay for Hamada's exhibition later in the year. 'The Pottery of Shoji Hamada'[20] reinforced Leach's ideas of pottery as a moral agent of social value. Yanagi presented Hamada as the leading potter of a new renaissance in craft, working to a code of beauty defined by the use of natural materials, utility and humility. Whereas Leach was frequently oblique, Yanagi was direct and this was one of the most strident essays of the inter-war years. Yanagi stated simply 'Up to the present almost all modern potters have wasted their talents on technique.'[21] He cast pottery emphatically as a handicraft and condemned work that did not conform to his values as 'insincerities' and 'novelties'. He saw Hamada's pottery as a physical extension of a set of moral concerns, represented by 'beauty', 'soundness', 'truth', 'health', 'organic' and 'nature' and proposed a code that, if followed, would lead to a beauty of truth. The first criterion was the quality of materials: 'Few understand that the beauty of ceramics is mainly the beauty of materials.'[22] These needed to be natural and Yanagi dismissed most modern pottery as an abuse of nature because it did not use 'the common materials of the earth'. Secondly, beauty was dependent on utility: 'Modern artist-potters forget that the aim of the handicrafts is primarily concerned with utility, not ornament.'[23] This signalled the need to return pottery 'from the parlour to the living-room.' Work which Yanagi viewed

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[20] Yanagi, S., 'The Pottery of Shoji Hamada', London, *Paterson's Gallery*, October, 1931.
[21] Yanagi, 1931, p. 1.
[22] Yanagi, 1931, p. 2.

as ornamental or luxurious came in for the strongest criticism: 'pieces made only for decoration are inevitably in one way or another diseased or abnormal.'[24] The final criterion, although not expressed as such, was humility, which was unobtainable by direct means. This was to be found in traditional crafts, 'the simplest and commonest of objects.'[25] The issue of humility presented a paradox in that the conscious attainment of this state negated any possibility of achievement. Yanagi concluded that wisdom was the quality needed for the 'sophisticated individualistic potter of to-day, who is desirous of distinguishing himself by doing something unusual.'

Unsurprisingly Marriot, who reviewed Hamada's exhibition along with Staite Murray's 1931 solo show at Lefevre Galleries, described the work as existing at 'the extreme possibilities of the art of potting.'[26] His response to Hamada's pottery was subdued; it was 'simple and just a little lacking in subtlety' although technically sound. Marriot commended the brushwork although he did not seem to understand Hamada's decorative schemes, thinking that rectangular patterns applied to circular forms were 'mistakes'. *Artwork* briefly reviewed the exhibition and found the work fresh with a 'swinging freedom of handling'.[27] Despite the severity of the catalogue essay, the reviewer apparently found a sense of humour in the work that prevented it 'from being portentous.'

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[23] Yanagi, 1931, p. 3.
[24] Yanagi, 1931, p. 4.
[25] Yanagi, 1931, p. 4.
[26] Marriot, Nov., 1931.
[27] 'A Chronicle of Exhibitions', *Artwork*, Vol. VII, No. 28, Winter, 1931, p. 293.

21.2 Bernard Leach 1931- 4

Despite his profile Leach had to wait until 1931 for his first independent feature in the English press.[28] 'The Pottery and Tiles of Bernard Leach'[29] in *Artwork* was by John Gould Fletcher, an American poet living in London. Given the length of his wait, this workmanlike article must have been a disappointment, despite its substantial length. Fletcher closely followed Leach's previous articles emphasising the social value of craft with a mix of Arts and Crafts ideas diluted by a mild Formalism and details of personal biography. He presented Leach as a potter who combined 'intuitive sympathy'[30] with an intellectual prowess and was able to comprehend issues across different times and cultures

> 'he has established himself as the true link and continuation between the art of the older craftsman potters and the new art potters, not only in England, but previously in Japan.'[31]

While many critics did not see Leach's work as anything more than a blend of Chinese and early English pottery, Fletcher described it as 'a product so peculiarly his own that it resembles nothing that has been done before.'[32] Describing the way that Leach drew upon many influences both in his forms and painted decoration, and his intentions in establishing a tradition

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[28] Cardew's article of 1925 is not considered impartial as he was an assistant to Leach at the time

[29] Gould Fletcher, J., 'The Pottery and Tiles of Bernard Leach', *Artwork*, Vol. VII, No. 26, Summer, 1931.

[30] Gould Fletcher, 1931, p. 118.

[31] Gould Fletcher, 1931, p. 117.

[32] Gould Fletcher, 1931, p. 123.

'independent of locality'[33], Fletcher however provided a perceptive analysis of the hybrid nature of future Anglo-Oriental pottery.

Two concurrent exhibitions in 1931 revealed the increasing polarisation of studio pottery. While Staite Murray exhibited at Lefevre Galleries, Leach showed at Muriel Rose's Little Gallery, a gallery and shop selling contemporary English craft, imported crafts and modern manufactured goods[34]. Giving support to Leach as a West country artist *The Western City News* printed an unaccredited review of both exhibitions called 'Pottery for Use and Ornament'[35]. The individuality and high price of Staite Murray's work was discussed while Leach was commended for 'striving to give the public pottery of excellent quality at the lowest possible price.' Any compromise of its individuality was considered to be a 'most laudable' sacrifice.

After covering Hamada and Staite Murray together earlier in the year, Marriot reviewed Leach's exhibition at the Little Gallery in 1931 on its own. He was now fully committed to Leach's ideas for making production pottery, 'pushing the resources of the small private kiln, staffed by two or three, as far as they will go to meet factory production.'[36] Marriot viewed this as a form of small scale manufacturing: 'From an industrial point of view, this exhibition has a certain importance.' Marriot complained about the lack of

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[33] Gould Fletcher, 1931, p. 123.
[34] For a full account of the gallery see Kate Woodhead's thesis *Muriel Rose and the Little Gallery*, M.A. Thesis, V & A/R.C.A., 1989.
[35] 'Pottery for Use and Ornament', *The Western City News*, 10 November, 1931.
[36] Marriot, C., 'Stoneware Pottery', *The Times*, 24 November, 1931.

good modern industrial products in England (with the exception of Wedgwood) commenting on how people had to buy 'from Sweden, Germany, or Czechoslovakia' in order not to compromise their taste. Marriot listed the full range of domestic items available in the exhibition and commented

> 'As a rule, and for good reasons, questions of price do not come into notices of art exhibitions, but in this case price is a definite factor in the artistic—or at any rate technical—problem, and it may be said that the average price of the articles is about half a guinea.'

These prices formed a sharp contrast to the cost of Leach's individual exhibition pieces shown with Tomimoto earlier in the year, at up to 30 guineas, although these were still cheap in comparison to Staite Murray, who charged 100 guineas for a piece in 1926.

No reviews have been found for Leach in the next two years. Watson describes how Leach moved to Dartington in 1932 in an attempt to put his ideas for production into practice with the support of Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst at their estate in Dartington[37]. This was a time of financial pressure and Leach was also struggling with technical problems in making the prototypes for his new domestic line of stoneware.

Leach returned to the Beaux Arts Gallery in Bruton Place for an exhibition in 1933. As discussed in Chapter 17, by the mid 1930s Marriot was losing interest in studio pottery and his review of this exhibition in *The Times* had

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[37] Watson, O., *Bernard Leach Potter and Artist*, London, Crafts Council, 1997, p. 17.

a disconsolate tone. In 'Mr. Bernard Leach'[38] he fell back on his stock opening of how difficult it was to write about pottery. After his earlier enthusiasm for Leach's plans Marriot wrote of Leach's intentions 'Behind all his work is felt the desire to push individual pottery as far as it will go without loss of quality.' In what can only be interpreted as a warning he added

> 'This is well because, apart from the advantages to lean purses, "the trade" is more likely to respond in quality to such an approach than if the individual potter stood aloof with museum pieces.'[39]

The change in Marriot's tone and his description of 'lean purses' and 'aloof' potters reflects a change in the critical and economic climate in England. The effects of the Depression and a growing awareness of the Modern Movement had sharpened the focus of Leach's plans. His objective ever since 'A Potter's Outlook' had been clear—he believed the future of studio pottery was in utilitarian production, but had not been able to effectively deliver this after six years. The gulf for Leach was not just between studio pottery and industry during the 1930s, but between the desire and ability to move studio pottery from the drawing room to the kitchen.

21.3 Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie & Norah Braden

Leach's students were having more success in balancing issues of price, utility and technical consistency. After working at the Leach Pottery in 1924 Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie established Coleshill Pottery in Wiltshire and

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[38] Marriot, C., 'Mr Bernard leach', *The Times*, 5 December, 1933.

was joined in 1928 by Norah Braden who had worked at St Ives since 1925. Together they developed a palette of simplified forms and subtle ash glazes which were exhibited in their joint shows over the next seven years. They were the only women throwers to be considered on a par with Leach and Staite Murray. After a first exhibition at the Little Gallery in 1929[40] Pleydell-Bouverie and Braden were offered an exhibition at Paterson's Gallery in 1930. In a brief review Marriot described their 'Unfailing good taste and steady technical prowess'[41]. Pleydell-Bouverie's glazes were commended while Braden was described as having 'a special gift for decoration'. Marriot felt that their forms lacked the emotional richness of Leach and Staite Murray but added 'awakening will come.'

The publication of 'English Stoneware Pottery by Miss K. Pleydell-Bouverie and Miss D. K. N. Braden'[42] in 1930 suggests that critical esteem for their work had risen quickly. This generously illustrated, eight page article by W. A. Thorpe in *Artwork* was a remarkable bonus for the two young potters, and preceded Leach's first major press feature. Typically, it took until the fifth page for Thorpe to specifically discuss their work but he was then very complimentary. He described theirs as an 'interesting partnership'[43] although acknowledging their independence. Pleydell-Bouverie was 'the shape maker' and Braden 'the decorator', descriptions that would hold throughout their careers. Thorpe felt their forms were 'clear and fluent' and

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[39] Marriot, December, 1933.
[40] see Chapter 10.
[41] Marriot, C., 'Stoneware Pottery', *The Times*, 22 May, 1930.
[42] Thorpe, Winter, 1930.
[43] Thorpe, Winter, 1930, p. 260.

Braden's decoration 'freely and firmly brushed, neither 'pretty' nor pictorial'. Since he regarded pots as more than functional he, unlike Marriot, did not expect them to only fulfil domestic needs. Thorpe wrote 'there was no question of mere utility—tea-pots that will pour well, cups you can drink from; those are the hope of a better, but not brighter, Staffordshire.'[44] He described the subdued ash glazes literally as 'a bit of landscape brought indoors' and equated the work's sensibility with English water-colour painting.

Marriot's next review of Pleydell-Bouverie and Braden was more considered, describing experiments with ash glazes and discussing their new developments. In 'Stoneware Pottery'[45] of 1932 he felt they had not made a successful transition to large pots although he congratulated Braden for the 'discretion of her brush decoration.' He also approved of their 'closer preoccupation with articles of everyday use, such as cups and saucers.' Just as he had praised Leach a few months earlier for making tableware, he now commended Pleydell-Bouverie and Braden with a comment that moved studio pottery further away from being the expressive art form he had so valued at the end of the 1920s. 'The steady working down to common use is wholly welcome, for potting, however you may look at it, is a domestic art.'

There seemed to be a four years absence before Pleydell-Bouverie's next review was published, by which time Braden had left Coleshill. Marriot

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[44] Thorpe, Winter, 1930, p. 265.
[45] Marriot, C., 'Stoneware Pottery', *The Times*, 23 May 1932.

covered this under 'Christmas Art Shows'[46] and it was the last studio pottery exhibition he reviewed. Complimentary, if restrained, Marriot commented on how Pleydell-Bouverie had established her identity through the 'exquisite subtlety' of her 'russet and grey' glazes. The review also included Marriot's response to Alfred and Louise Powell's designed ceramics made by Wedgwood. [47] He described the Powell's work as 'traditional'[48] an 'English style of ornament' and compared it to Morris's designs. He talked of the freedom and certainty of the brushwork, and Alfred Powell's 'genius for finding patterns'. Marriot's hopes for studio pottery as a new and socially relevant domestic art form were never realised. Ironically, in his last review of studio pottery, he found it in the designs of the Powell's Arts and Crafts inspired pottery made by Wedgwood.

21.4 Michael Cardew

Michael Cardew was Leach's first English assistant, working at St Ives between 1923 and 1926. Despite taking part in some of Leach's shows during the mid 1920s he established his presence in the art press through his article 'The Pottery of Mr Leach'[49] in 1925. Cardew established Winchcombe pottery in 1926 and started to exhibit his neo-vernacular slipware, but it was not until the early 1930s that he made a dramatic impression in an exhibition of

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[46] Marriot, C., 'Christmas Art Shows', *The Times*, 16 December, 1936.
[47] Designed pottery has been excluded from this historiography but a brief comparison between Marriot's view of the Powells and Pleydell-Bouverie reveals the extent of his change in attitude to contemporary ceramics
[48] Marriot, Dec., 1936.
[49] Cardew, November, 1925.

the National Society of Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, and Potters. [50] Marriot noted 'the chief interest is in the sculpture and pottery, particularly the pottery.' [51] Written when he was still optimistic about the potential of studio pottery to fulfil a social need he declared

> 'England leads the world, and there is evidence here that the studio quality is coming into wares produced under what are called "economic" conditions.'

Listing the participating studio potters, Marriot wrote of Cardew 'His name has been put last because his slipware will be the real discovery of the exhibition'. Although Cardew was consciously reviving the slipware idiom, Marriot did not view his work as revivalist. He portrayed Cardew as reinterpreting historical work within a modern context and maintaining a balance between aesthetics, utility and the spirit of the past.

> 'What Mr. Cardew has done, to put it as simply as possible, is to lift this peasant tradition into the region of conscious art and still keep its native character and relation to utility.'[52]

Marriot's review of Cardew's exhibition at The New Handworkers' Gallery 'Winchcombe Pottery' in *The Times* two days later continued this approach and he described his slipware as 'very impressive'[53] and 'without a trace of mediaeval affection'. This neo-vernacular earthenware was not popular with all critics as Thorpe revealed - 'The pottery of frugalism is old English slipware'[54]. Slipware did not automatically benefit from association with the

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[50] The Society was set up to exhibit all forms of art without prejudice in an annual show.
[51] Marriot, C., 'The National Society', *The Times*, 9 September, 1931.
[52] Marriot, September, 1931.
[53] Marriot, C., 'Winchombe Pottery', *The Times*, June 11, 1931.
[54] Thorpe, Winter 1930, p. 257.

perceived exoticism and purity of early Chinese stoneware. Marriot, however, cast Cardew's work as thoroughly modern in terms of taste, economics and a production which he claimed benefited indirectly from the influence of Oriental methods. After the ongoing, but unresolved, debate of the previous few years on the role of studio pottery, Marriot had finally found a studio pottery he could champion unreservedly. He announced that Cardew had 'solved the problem of inexpensive domestic wares' and concluded his review by stating 'Here, one would say, is not "some pottery," but "a pottery."

In the following year Cardew wrote 'Slipware Pottery: Following the English Tradition'[55] for *Homes and Gardens* in which gave a detailed account of his techniques and methods. Cardew's use of materials mirrored that of Leach and Yanagi and in an animated passage he stated they

> 'should be as near their natural state as is compatible with his art, not the artificial products of the laboratory. "Art imitates Nature by working as she works."'[56]

Although this article revealed little of the ideas behind Cardew's work it declared his ambition to 'enlarge the slipware tradition' and to 'bring "pottery as pure art" into living relation with the needs of everyday life.'[57] The mix of Modernist and Mingei discourse was unusual, as these critical approaches rarely overlapped. It clarified Cardew's unique position in being

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[55] Cardew, M., 'Slipware Pottery: : Following the English Tradition', *Homes and Gardens*, May, 1932.
[56] Cardew, May, 1932, p. 549.
[57] Cardew, May, 1932, p. 548.

a part of the Leach School and a studio pottery movement which was built on the appreciation of Chinese stoneware, but working independently of this Oriental tradition. Cardew's juxtaposition of pottery as pure art within an English tradition echoed Read's ideas of a decade earlier, but he was also committed to the idea of making useful work and, up to that point, arguments about pottery as abstract art had generally been applied to non-functional work. His inclusion of a short section entitled 'The Old Potters and their Local Characteristics' reveals Cardew's need to establish a context for pottery through recent vernacular pottery.

Despite later acknowledging his dislike of the Arts and Crafts movement[58], Cardew took part in a series of annual exhibitions of Cotswold artists in Chipping Campden. The membership of the group was impressive and included Dorothy Larcher, Phyllis Barron and Ernest Gimson. In 1932 *Apollo* reported the show 'Exhibition of the Work of Cotswold Artists and Craftsmen'[59] but did not review the work. The following year *Design For To-Day* published a two page article 'Cotswold Art and Craftsmanship'[60] on the third exhibition and included illustrations of a 'Bedroom Set, slipware decoration: Michael Cardew'[61], a sofa covered in Barron and Larcher's printed linen, a cabinet by Gordon Russell and a table and chair by Edward Barnsley. Published in the same year as Read's *Art and Industry* the author acknowledged that although design was now receiving recognition, the place of individual handwork was still justified.

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[58] see Chapter 1, page 24.
[59] 'The Cotswold Artists', *Apollo*, Vol. XVI, No. 94, October 1932, p. 198.
[60] A. B. R. F., 'Cotswold Art and Craftsmanship', *Design For To-Day*, August. 1934.

> 'But it is the handcraftsman we turn to for the special job, for something that is to serve us faithfully for years, and to remain always a treasured possession, something that use will endure with a patina which chromium plate and the pseudo Tudor can never acquire.'[62]

The Studio published 'Cotswold Craftsmanship'[63] the following year and also included illustrations of Cardew, Barnsley and Barron's work. It touched on the problems of craft revivalism which was a growing issue for Cardew and studio pottery in general.

> 'The unfortunate associations with the term "arts and crafts" is one of the difficulties with which those who wish to ensure the survival of country traditions have to contend.'[64]

Cardew never limited himself to purely domestic work and exhibited work of an impressive scale. In a review of a group show in 1933 *Apollo* commented 'Mr Cardew [exhibits] pieces of great beauty with this distinction, that Mr. Cardew "goes" less for the drawing -room effects in large-size jars with sgraffito and slip decoration.'[65]

In 1933, while he was losing interest in Staite Murray and Leach's work, Marriot was enthused by Cardew. He opened the review 'Two Potters'[66] by claiming that none of the other potters were 'getting closer to domestic requirements' apart from Cardew. Marriot credited Cardew with having reclaimed and modernised pre-Wedgwood slipware and technically refined

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[61] A. B. R. F., August. 1934, p. 297.
[62] A. B. R. F., August. 1934, p. 296.
[63] 'Cotswold Craftsmanship', *The Studio*, Vol. CIX, No. 507, June 1935.
[64] 'Cotswold Craftsmanship', June 1935, p. 333.
[65] Lord Dunsany and Some Potters at Messrs. Colnaghis's', *Apollo*, Vol. XVII, No. 97, January, 1933.
[66] Marriot, C., 'Two Potters', *The Times*, 10 November, 1933.

it through his association with Leach and Oriental pottery. The irony was that, despite this aesthetic and commercial praise, Marriot's views of Cardew's slipware were predicated on a set of homely values — 'fireproof cooking dishes and pots, casseroles, jugs, jars for draught beer or cider, bread pans, coffee and tea pots, garden pots and pots for flowers'. The pots were discussed last in this review and although praised for being 'delightfully "fat" and freehand in style' no longer represented the new discipline he had admired as an art form in 1928.

No more significant reviews of Cardew's exhibitions have been found after 1933. Coverage of studio pottery declined from the mid 1930s as the Studio yearbook chart reveals. His pots were illustrated in a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Arts and Crafts movement in *The Studio*, 'Arts and Crafts Today'[67]. He also had a solo exhibition at the new Brygos Gallery in 1937 but no reviews seem to have been published. In the short foreword for the catalogue Cardew again emphasised technical issues and hinted at the imminent end to making slipware 'it is capable of development in the direction of Stoneware without losing its essential characteristics.'[68]

Shortly after this exhibition in 1937, Cardew abandoned slipware, moved his pottery and left England for the best part of two decades. If critical attitudes towards the neo-vernacular revival are compared to those prior to the exhibition of Early English Pottery held by the Burlington Fine Art Club in 1914, its condition in the late 1930s would be judged a success. After

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[67] 'Arts and Crafts of Today', *The Studio*, Vol. CXVI, No. 548, Nov., 1938, p. 255.

approximately 200 years of neglect, this pottery had been commended first by collectors, then critics, undergone a revival and featured in an exhibition in the V&A celebrating English pottery. However, if examined within the critical precepts that led to the beginning of the neo-vernacular revival, the picture is less clear. Fry launched the critical re-evaluation of early English pottery and while he approved of the social role of slipware, 'pottery for the people'[69], he did not value the 'coarse' pottery or the work of the Tofts which he dismissed as a 'a really crude, barbaric and brutally clownish idea of deformation'[70]. Fry was interested in Medieval English Pottery because of its formal integrity, 'a great refinement of taste' and 'a real appreciation of form and texture'. The second stage of the critical re-evaluation of vernacular English pottery was guided by Read who, as discussed, followed Fry's ideas. It was the English mediaeval jugs which Read felt had a nobility of abstract form while slipware was again dismissed as fanciful'[71]. Fry and Read were not interested in the warmth or illustrative potential of slip ware, more the explicit nature of roughly glazed form. This is not to claim that Leach, Hamada and Cardew made a mistake - they were simply interested in exploring different ideas. Their neo-vernacular revival appropriated a skeletal Modernist rationale, infused it with a heritage mentality while adding the social concerns of Mingei and the Modern Movement. Fry and Read never reviewed a studio pottery exhibition of stoneware, let alone slipware. The nearest Read came was in the article *Art and Decoration*[72]

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[68] Cardew, M., foreword to *Slipware Pottery*, London, The Grygos Gallery, November, 1937.
[69] Fry, 1914, p. 331.
[70] Fry, 1914, p. 331.
[71] Read, 1925, p. 320.
[72] Read, H., 'Art and Decoration', *The Listener*, 7 May, 1930.

where he discussed Staite Murray and the RCA students and took issue with what he regarded as superfluous decoration in art. Read wrote that he hoped Staite Murray and his students 'will become enemies of all decoration' stating 'art should be free from all irrelevant associations - should exist in its own rights, independent of time and place and circumstance'. The neo-vernacular revival of Leach and Cardew was not independent of these 'irrelevant associations' but revelled in its connection to the past. In consequence, the slipware pot did not ever become an expression of pure form but ended up on the kitchen page to be discussed with other cooking utensils.

21.5 Leach post-Japan

In 1934 the Elmhirsts funded an extended trip for Leach to visit Japan to study methods of pottery production. The combination of this trip and his son David's new skill acquired from a pottery managers' course in Stoke-on-Trent transformed Leach's ideas on production pottery from an aspiration to a reality. When Leach returned in 1935 he and David had a model between them and the technical knowledge needed to run a production pottery. Leach was finally able to realistically begin producing domestic pottery in the quantities he had promised since publishing *A Potter's Outlook*.

While Leach was away, Yanagi devoted a whole issue of the *Mingei* magazine *Kogei* (Crafts) for Leach to write an account of his trip. Leach wrote three chapters in a diary format titled 'Thoughts on Japanese Crafts',

'Impressions of Japan after Fourteen Years' and 'A letter to England'[73]. Most of his responses were accounts of his visits, workshops and lectures, but in response to a request from Leonard Elmhirst enquiring about his plans for the Dartington pottery Leach discussed his ideas.

> 'This year of actual work amongst the potters in nine potteries has taught me a lot technically about the handling of clay, pigments, glazes, kiln etc. and I have been able to discuss many of the difficulties we have encountered during the last fourteen years in England and to get light on them. That alone would, to my mind, have justified the journey. ...
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> So I feel more strongly than ever that a pioneering effort to unite art and science in a pottery at Dartington Hall must depend first on traditional craft experience, secondly on imagination, thirdly on scientific backing and help, and finally on adequate business procedure.'
> [74]

On returning to England, Leach organised two consecutive exhibitions at the Little Gallery of his own work followed by an exhibition of Japanese craft. The impact of his Japanese trip seemed to immediately register on Marriot who wrote 'he has extended his activities in the direction of everyday use'[75]. Marriot seemed surprised by these developments because for the first time he felt the need to clarify Leach's identity as a studio potter stating 'to make a convenient distinction, Mr Bernard Leach, of St Ives, comes into the category of studio potters". Choosing to write about the slipware in preference to the stoneware, Marriot continued with the approach he had used for Cardew describing the pottery 'as a "marriage" of English and Oriental qualities". This was a review written by a disaffected critic however. Marriot wrote only of the 'general effect' of Leach's work and was

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[73] Leach, B., *Kogei (Crafts)*, No. 53, May, 1935.
[74] Leach, May, 1935, pp. 34-35.
[75] Marriot, C., 'Mr Bernard Leach', *The Times*, 25 April, 1936.

cursory in compiling a list of pots 'jugs, bowls, cups, dishes—'. He concluded his review with the same homely response as to Cardew. In discussing the material qualities and the flow of sliptrailing, Marriot wrote it 'brings back happy memories of childish "writing" with treacle on the nursery suet pudding.'[76] This was the last of eleven reviews Marriot wrote on Leach and it contrasted with his first cautious review in 1923 where he had praised Leach's pots for their 'dignity of shape, depth of colour and quality of surface'[77] Comparing Leach's slipware to treacle and suet pudding would never have been auspicious but it was an unfortunate end to a thirteen year critical relationship.

Leach's exhibition at the Little Gallery was also reviewed by Jan Gordon of *The Observer*, a writer new to studio pottery. Gordon revealed he had been an art student alongside Leach although he did not say where. His article 'The Rise of Potting-Bernard Leech [sic] ' [78] was more journalese than art criticism, with Leach, Tomimoto and Kawai's names misspelt and Yanagi mistaken as a craftsman. Gordon combined an overview of studio pottery with his review and despite his unconventional approach, questioned recent developments. By 1936, studio pottery had changed dramatically. Leach and his ex-students had assumed a more prominent role since Staite Murray's critical reputation had declined and he withdrew into the Seven and Five Society. With Leach, Cardew, Pleydell-Bouverie and Braden actively making domestic pottery Gordon discussed studio pottery not as a

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[76] Marriot, April, 1936.
[77] Marriot, November , 1923.
[78] Gordon, J., 'The Rise of Potting, *The Observer*, 3 May, 1936.

new artistic discipline but a craft. He broadly summarised developments over the previous two decades writing 'Twenty-five years ago the "pot" was a thing of little worth. The art of potting was, if not moribund, at least in a state of suspended animation.' Gordon attributed the emergence of studio pottery to modern changes and argued that creative clay practice discovered the idiom of pottery 'inspired by an apparent purpose'. Now the direction of studio pottery had changed, Gordon opened the art and craft debate which had previously been irrelevant when it was considered as a legitimate art form. With an irreverent and deceptively sharp approach, he exposed a new range of issues that more qualified critics were yet to tackle.

> 'Thus potting has contrived to straddle both branches appertaining to Fine Art on the one side and to Craft-Art on the other, absorbing the new-born enthusiasms of both. Yet, in fact, though potters always lay claim to be craftsmen, the high art of potting, that is, the production of rare pieces with unique glazes, belongs to the most high-brow Fine Arts, and is cherished as such. Much pottery is abstract Fine Art camouflaged in the sheep's clothing of a humble craft.'

Gordon discussed Leach's history and recent trip to Japan in the same conversational manner, describing Leach's recent lecture as 'some unusual film pictures' and the *Mingei* movement as crafts practised 'by the people and for the people'. The work was barely discussed but he described the slipware as 'an apparent blend of Japanese technique and English models' and the pottery as 'primarily, as peasant objects [which] are, for use.'

Leach wrote the Foreword for the next exhibition at the Little Gallery on 'Contemporary Japanese Crafts'[79]. This included an account of the current

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[79] Leach, B., Foreword to *Contemporary Japanese Crafts*, Little Gallery, 5 - 23 May, 1936.

state of Japanese craft and a reaffirmation of his ideas on craft. There is little to differentiate between Leach's ideas and those of the *Mingei* movement at this time but surprisingly, he avoided making direct references. He discussed the official magazine *Kogei*, without revealing it was published by the Nippon Mingei Kyokwai[80] and only referred to Yanagi's group as a 'movement'[81] and 'traditional craftworkers'. Leach discussed the changes that had taken place since he lived there 'the little start that we had made ... had grown into a nation-wide movement.' Integral to Leach's view of the Mingei movement was the acceptance of Japanese class structure. In England he discussed theoretical relationships between creative craftsmen and artisans but in Japan these relationships were explicit. He described this relationship as 'Between the more or less unconscious peasant craftsmen and men of international culture, like Yanagi and Hamada'.[82]

The exhibition was reviewed in *The New English Weekly* by Hugh Gordon Porteus in the article 'Contemporary Japanese Crafts'[83]. The article opened with a sweeping attack on the practice of revivalism in the crafts, and roundly condemned the English Arts and Crafts movement for its 'back-to-the-guilds' attitude. But Porteus differentiated between what he described as the '*perjury*[84]' of this movement and the revival in Japan on the grounds that Leach had kept it 'very much alive', taking Leach's own accounts of his influence in Japan as given. Leach was credited with having 'started the

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[80] translated as Japanese Folkcraft Association.
[81] Leach, May, 1936, p. 1.
[82] Leach, May, 1936, p. 3.
[83] Porteus, H. G., 'Contemporary Japanese Crafts', *The New English Weekly*, 21 May, 1936.
[84] Porteus, May, 1936, p. 115.

movement twenty-five years ago with the aid of two Japanese artists, Yanagi and Tomimoto.' Porteus complimented the cultural exchange between East and West and the balance of the handcraft movement because it had 'room in it for peasants as well as intellectuals.' Unusually he referred to the growing political tensions between Japan and the West which Porteus described as 'Japanese Imperialism' from the 'Germany of the East'[85]. Where the exoticism of the Orient had worked to Leach's advantage over the previous sixteen years, the association with Japan was now becoming problematic.

The last reference to Cardew, Leach and Pleydell-Bouverie in the national press of the inter-war years was published in *The Times* in 1938. In an inauspicious conclusion to the previous critical debate on studio pottery, the Article 'Attractive Fireproof Ware' with the subtitle 'Blue—Yellow-Green—White—Pastel Shades'[86] was not published in the arts review section but in the life style section. Slipware pottery was described as having been 'successfully revived and treated modernistically' by Cardew and followed a discussion of Cottage Blue stoneware made by Denby, while Leach and Pleydell-Bouverie's stoneware, was included with Swedish fireproof ware and 'rustic faience' from Provence. In quantity, quality and diversity critical writing on studio pottery collapsed during the latter half of the decade. Cardew's exhibition at the Brygos Gallery in 1937 was the last significant exhibition for the group of potters associated with Leach and, as mentioned

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[85] Porteus, May, 1936, p. 115.
[86] 'Attractive Fireproof Ware: Blue—Yellow-Green—White—Pastel Shades', *The Times*, 19 October, 1938.

previously, this was not reviewed. The number of studio pots illustrated in *The Studio Year Book* had declined even earlier. In 1930 forty two pots from a total of twenty studio potters were included. But over the next nine years only nine pots were illustrated, six from Leach, one from Staite Murray and two in 1937 from what was described as the Leach pottery.[87] The wider events of economics and politics in 1930s have not been discussed in this thesis but Herbert Read's Editorial and resignation in *The Burlington* at the outbreak of the war is a reminder of the severity of English life at the time. He wrote of the need to temper the growing military build up 'with the sensuous and humanising influences of the arts.'

21.6 A Potter's Book

The period under review in this thesis closes in 1940, a date chosen to signify the end of the first phase of English studio pottery and expressly to acknowledge Bernard Leach's *A Potter's Book*[88]. No other publication in studio pottery has had the impact of its two hundred and ninety six pages and seventy seven black and white illustrations. Leach's introductory chapter 'Towards a Standard' consolidated his ideas and writing on pottery of the previous twenty years while the remaining two hundred and sixty eight pages demonstrated how to make it.

Leach reaffirmed the complex mix of social, moral and aesthetic concerns he had first raised in *A Potter's Outlook* but the main difference was one of

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[87] Editorial changes do not account for this as G. Holme was Editor throughout this period.

tone. Twelve years earlier his financial difficulties and growing creative isolation revealed a barely suppressed anger, but by 1940 he had softened. Leach was 53 years old and confident in his mid-career. Whereas before he had attacked his fellow potters and undermined the critical stability of studio pottery, he was now the leading figure of a small school which towered over English studio pottery. Staite Murray and Reginald Wells had ceased working, his students had matured, the *Mingei* movement had consolidated and Yanagi offered invaluable support.

Finally, a distinction must be made between Leach's 'critical' writing and the 'sloganeering' of his general writing. Most of his public writing was a form of 'marketing', consciously promoting his work through a variety of narratives. His life was broken down into tableaux - Kenzan, pre-industrial idylls, Japan, Cornwall and peasant workers. The self-aggrandising and transparency of his writing is at times distasteful but as with *A Potter's Outlook*, *Towards a Standard* reveals his dilemmas and creative struggles.

> 'It is difficult enough to keep one's head in the maelstrom, to live truly and work sanely without that sustaining and steadying power of tradition, which guide all applied arts in the past.'[89]

Towards a Standard was also rhetorical and convoluted in style and structure but Leach re-affirmed his vision for studio pottery. On the seventeenth page he finally declared

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[88] Leach, 1940.
[89] Leach, 1940, p. 16.

> 'here at the outset I am endeavouring to lay hold of a spirit and a standard which applies to both East and West. What we want to know is how to recognize the good or bad qualities in any given pot.'[90]

His attempts at defining these qualities drew on familiar themes. The lack of Western standards, the supremacy of Sung pottery, the inadequacies of industry and the loss of traditional handicrafts. Leach also acknowledged alternative critical theories and on the second page he referred to Read. He took issue with Read's ideas of 'the machine crafts'[91] but endorsed the importance of intuition in art as discussed in Read's article of 1930 'Art and Decoration'[92]. Leach also discussed functionalism and the Modern Movement but disapproved of the effect that 'Le Corbusier and Gropius of the Bauhaus'[93] were having on all crafts. His views on their 'dynamic concept of three-dimensional form'[94] was that they were 'over-intellectual' and were antipathetic to fine arts and handcraft pottery. His discussion of early forms of pottery as primitive also reflected contemporary critical practice: 'The range of plastic beauty achieved in primitive pottery .. is immense.'[95]

Although anti-modern, Leach did not support the 'outmoded'[96] Arts and Crafts movement which he described as 'pseudo-medieval crafts little

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[90] Leach, 1940, p. 17.
[91] Leach, 1940, p. 2.
[92] Read, May, 1930, p. 805.
[93] Leach, 1940, p. 14.
[94] Leach, 1940, p. 15.
[95] Leach, 1940, p. 21.
[96] Leach, 1940, p. 6.

related to national work and life'[97]. However, Ruskinian anti-industrial language permeated the essay.

> 'Bad forms and banal, debased pretentious decoration ... crudity of colour combined with cheapness and inappropriateness of decoration and tawdriness of form.'[98]

All post-industrial pottery lacked standards. The most recent work that he acknowledged was Delft pottery of the early 18th century. With the exception of 'Rhenish salt-glazed wares' Europe barely qualified as having a stoneware tradition, which he promoted through the 'Sung Standard'

> 'the use so far as possible of natural materials in the endeavour to obtain the best quality of body and glaze; in throwing and in a striving towards unity, spontaneity, and simplicity of form, and in general the subordination of all attempts at technical cleverness to straightforward, unselfconscious workmanship.'[99]

If pottery could be made with the right blend of materials, vitality and intuition then it would have a true nature, 'a co-operation of hand and individual personality'.[100] Leach regarded this 'mood, or nature, of a pot to be of first importance.'[101] His recommendations were not confined to aesthetic concerns since pottery was an expression of life: 'The upshot of the argument is that a pot in order to be good should be a genuine expression of life'. [102] Because contemporary English and Japanese pottery respected these Sung values it was considered superior to the revival of studio crafts in

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[97] Leach, 1940, p. 4.
[98] Leach, 1940, p. 3.
[99] Leach, 1940, p. 6.
[100] Leach, 1940, p. 1.
[101] Leach, 1940, p. 18.
[102] Leach, 1940, p. 20.

Europe and America. Leach stated simply 'the Japanese and English are the best.'[103]

Like his Modernist rivals, Leach's writing was underwritten by a Utopian vision of the future. His circular arguments, wide ranging criteria and numerous references to 'life' are difficult to pinpoint and have to be viewed within his religious beliefs which up to this point had not been made public in his English writing. For the first time he devoted a substantial section of the essay to Yanagi and the challenge of his Buddhist background.

As the studio potter's problems were a manifestation of 'a nation's cultural inheritance'[104] Leach looked to the marriage of East and West as a model to solve the fractured state of modern life. This new order would provide a synthesis and 'foundation for a world-wide' [105] or 'unifying culture out of which fresh traditions can grow.' [106] For Leach, the Sung dynasty represented the time when synthesis in pottery and culture were achieved, a time when 'influences [were] welded together in one, for unification was then supreme'.[107]

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[103] Leach, 1940, p. 13.
[104] Leach, 1940, p. 9.
[105] Leach, 1940, p. 10.
[106] Leach, 1940, p. 10.
[107] Leach, 1940, p. 14.

21.7 Reviews of *A Potter's Book*

The first response to *A Potter's Book* was a short review published in *The Times Literary Supplement*[108]. The anonymous reviewer presented it as a 'how to do it' book aimed at the educational market but balked at the sweeping nature of Leach's opinions 'which may scarcely command universal acceptance'. Herbert Read reviewed *A Potter's Book* in the *New English Weekly*[109] where he approved of the sentiments to reconcile Eastern and Western art and Leach's high regard for Sung pottery but disagreed with his views on industry as anti-art. Read accused Leach of standing aside from manufacturing, writing 'My only criticism of Mr Leach is that he tends to condone, even to encourage this exclusiveness'. Read also accused Leach of unnecessarily polarising debate:

> 'He sets up an opposition between intellect and sensibility, which does indeed exist. But art is not the exclusive product of any one faculty of the human mind. At its highest it is a synthesis of all- of reason, intuition, feeling and sensation. But it can also legitimately appeal to a predominance of any one of these elements. Art is various- even the art of pottery.'[110]

Two weeks later Leach wrote a reply 'Pottery as Craft and Industry'[111] where he attempted to counter the claims of exclusiveness by simply repeating two sections from *Towards a Standard.*

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[108] Review of 'A Potter's Book', *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 July, 1940.
[109] Read, H., review of 'A Potter's Book', *New English Weekly*, 11 July, 1940, p. 143.
[110] Read, July, 1940, p. 143.
[111] Leach, B., correspondence, *New English Weekly*, 25 July, 1940, p. 172.

A writer named only as 'N.P.' reviewed *A Potter's Book* for *The Studio*.[112] This benign and generally complimentary review also treated it as a how to do book, describing how it was not meant 'to be a treatise on the art of pottery' and that it was aimed 'more at the potter than the consumer or connoisseur'. The reviewer described various passages from the book but raised a mild concern over Leach's attitudes towards industry which in tandem with the initials 'N.P.' suggests that the writer was Nikolaus Pevsner.

> 'As to this, the progressive industrialist will agree with Mr Leach although he will not always be happy in reading certain rather uneasy passages in Mr Leach's book on industrial methods of pottery making.'

The reviewer for *The Burlington*[113] was also anonymous and felt the book was 'ardently written, with an almost religious devotion.' After describing the practical sections which revealed the studio potter's 'methods and "secrets"', they took issue with Leach's disregard for all ceramics apart for Sung pottery.

> 'On the subject of all kinds of other ceramic achievement he pronounces judgement with an almost arrogant dogmatism, and this is hardly made more impressive by a knowledge of ceramic history which is, to say the least, somewhat defective. He cannot think of the history of pottery as a succession of phases or developments each realising its own sort of beauty. '

But, as with other reviewers, it was Leach's attitudes to industry which were most contentious. As the writer was well informed about both studio pottery

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[112] N. P., review of 'A Potter's Book', *The Studio*, October 1940, p. 143.
[113] Review of 'A Potter's Book', *The Burlington*, November, 1941, pp. 169-170.

and Stoke-on-Trent it was probably Gordon Forsyth, who was a regular reviewer of ceramic books for *The Burlington*. He wrote

> 'It is in regard to modern factory production that this essentially academic outlook is most unfortunate. Mr. Leach does not seem to understand that mass-produced pottery can have its own aesthetics, that there are other sorts of quality besides that approved by the great Tea Masters ... Ten years ago, Mr. Leach in a pamphlet entitled *A Potter's Outlook* showed an awareness of the dangers awaiting a self-conscious attitude of aloof "good taste" on the part of the studio potter, despising all the efforts of the factories, and proposed a compromise. Now he has only a faint hope that education will help, and that children may grow up with a sensuous appreciation of natural clay and glaze quality.'[114]

The final review of *A Potter's Book* was also anonymous. Judging by the language, sharpness of criticism directed at Leach's opinions of industry and design sentiments and fact that it was published in *The Listener* suggest that it was written by Herbert Read or a writer sympathetic to his critical outlook, since a second review by Read would have been most unusual. This long review consisted of two halves. The first described Leach's 'public spirit' in revealing his secrets, and his lucid writing on clay, glazes, kilns and impure materials. Leach's taste was described as being determined by the tea ceremony and his regard for Sung pottery was again complimented. But the reviewer again criticised Leach for not looking further forward than early Chinese art.

> 'Thus is formulated a new academicism. Not only are many other sorts of past ceramic achievement dismissed by it as debased or at best misguided, but the future is closed. It will admit only hand-made wares of the kind produced by the author for a precarious market of rich and cultured people, and those few commercially produced wares that illogically conform to the same standard. The characteristic modern

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[114] *The Burlington*, November, 1941, p. 170.

> techniques of mass production, with their far-reaching social implications, are denounced because their products do not conform to the Japanese standards; even at their best they are hard, cold, mechanically perfect and lacking in 'quality' (which is perfectly true). That these shortcomings, as Mr. Leach would call them, actually provide the ground and conditions for an entirely new sort of ceramic achievement he does not seem to guess. He does not perceive that his own self-conscious and backward-looking sophistication may obstruct the growth of a new tradition of mass-produced pottery.'[115]

In comparison to the tone of much of Leach's earlier writing, *A Potter's Book* was relatively restrained. But despite this cautious approach, of the five reviews, three were vociferous in condemning Leach's narrow attitudes towards industry and contemporary design, while the other two expressed reservations. As the most important Modernist critic of the mid-century, Read's concerns must be acknowledged, despite his differences to Leach. But, if Pevsner and Forsyth were the other anonymous reviewers, this reveals a consensus of criticism from three of the most prominent critics of the inter-war period.

Despite this consensus, Leach proved his critics were not as informed as they imagined. Their responses were shaped by 1930s attitudes to art and design, and failed to appreciate the effect Leach's visionary writing would have on the next generation of studio potters. *A Potter's Book* may have reflected the inter-war period with its emphasis on thrown stoneware and Sung pottery but it also acted as a bridge to a post-war mentality that, like the Labour government's landslide of 1945, could not have been predicted in advance. Leach's regret for lost traditions, his modern aesthetics, hands-on approach

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[115] Review of 'A Potter's Book', *The Listener*, 8 August, 1940, p. 210.

and exotic portrayal of Japanese life enthused the post-war generation of potters and has ensured that the book still remains in print today.

Chapter 22

Conclusion

This thesis argues that Modernist theories provided the critical framework for the appreciation of early studio pottery. Roger Fry's inclusion of Fauve ceramics in the exhibition *Manet and the Post Impressionists* and his primitivist interpretation of early Chinese and English pottery identified the main idioms of studio pottery during the 1910s. Critics such as Frank Rutter, W. McCance, Charles Marriot and W. A. Thorpe applied these ideas to the emerging discipline of studio pottery in the following decade. Herbert Read in particular developed Fry's ideas of abstract form in relationship to pottery which he re-interpreted as a theory of abstract plastic art in his book *English Pottery* in 1924.

The rise in critical esteem of early Chinese and Medieval English pottery during the 1920s and 1930s can be interpreted within early Modernist theory, specifically the concept of primitivism. Fry viewed primitive art as a regenerating force for what he regarded as the moribund state of painting in 1910 and extended these ideas to pottery through his pan-cultural and pan-material interests. Sung Dynasty stonewares and English vernacular earthenware had previously been of limited interest to a few Antiquarian scholars, collectors and potters. Fry's critical reappraisal established a contemporary relevance for this historical work and his views were adopted by later critics, just as his ideas on non-figurative design had been.

Although this thesis argues that Modernist criticism was instrumental to the development of studio pottery, it does not follow that studio pottery was exclusively a Modernist movement. Stella Tillyard argues in *The Impact of Modernism* that Fry's formalist theories were built upon Arts and Crafts concepts of material and form. The fact that Modernist ideas of abstraction and primitivism were mediated through familiar Arts and Crafts practice is crucial to understanding the origins of studio pottery and its uneasy relationship with Modernism. Of the pioneering potters only William Staite Murray pursued an assertively Modernist agenda. The relationship between the Leach school and Modernism is less clear cut but it is evident that Bernard Leach enjoyed a considerable indirect benefit, as did his pupils Michael Cardew, Nora Braden and Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie.

Reviewing critical writing on studio pottery as a whole over the thirty years between 1910 and 1940, it is difficult to look upon this period as anything other than a lost opportunity. Studio pottery, that is Modernist pottery conceived and executed by individuals, emerged as a modern art form during this pivotal time in 20th century English art and, for a brief period in the 1920s, embodied a new set of theories relevant to wider critical debate in English art. After this positive beginning, studio pottery finished the inter-war period in a period of critical free fall. Fry and Read had moved on and no other significant critics came forward to replace them. Studio pottery lost Marriot, its most prominent champion and the diversity of writers that had characterised the critical writing of the 1920s gave way to erratic

contributions from a few minor journalists. Coverage in all the national broadsheets and major magazines declined, and even *The Studio Year Book* barely included studio pottery after 1931. The new generation of specialist ceramic curators such as W. B. Honey and Arthur Lane were cautious in comparison to their predecessors Bernard Rackham and Herbert Read. In quantity and in qualitative terms, critical writing on studio pottery had collapsed by the outbreak of World War Two.

Leach's role in the establishment of studio pottery and championing of the Sung Standard needs to be viewed in the context that critical interest in early Chinese and English pottery was already well established by the time that he returned to England in 1920. However, Leach was undeniably an important figure and whether studio pottery could have made the transition and survived the changing critical climate of the 1930s without his contribution is speculative. Leach's forcibly expressed views had a marked effect, re-positioning studio pottery from an artistic movement to a craft based practice concerned with small scale workshop production. Coverage of studio pottery shifted from the galleries of Bond Street and the review pages of *The Times* to the High street and lifestyle articles in magazines such as *Homes and Gardens*.

The early years of studio pottery brought together a complex blend of issues which spanned 19th and 20th century debate. Many areas deserve further work, from the uneasy relationship between studio pottery and Modernism to the origins of Leach's Arts and Craft views, the extent of the relationship

between Art Pottery and studio pottery and the incorporation of *Mingei* values into English studio pottery. While studio pottery may not have fulfilled the expectations of many critics, the ground was laid for the post-war years when Leach emerged as a mature potter and for a later wave of Modernist pottery in the 1950s inspired by the ceramics of Picasso.

This historiography has disclosed many significant examples of critical writing that have remained hidden for nearly a century, and raised questions which only further research will be able to answer. However, it is clear that between 1910 and 1940 studio pottery was able to incorporate ideas about the place of craft in society and also, briefly, address avant-garde concepts of art.

Studio Pottery Illustrated in Studio Year-Book 1910-1919

	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919
Martin Brothers	6									
Annie MacNichol			1	1					1	
Ann MacBeth			3				1		3	
Reginald Wells				10						
Ashby Potter's Guild				3						
George Cox					7					
Frances Richards								4		
Dora Lunn										19
Gwendolene Parnell										3
Yearly Total	6	0	4	14	7	0	1	4	4	19

Editor: Geoffrey Holme 1919 -

Studio Pottery Illustrated in Studio Year-Book 1920-1929

	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
Gabriel C. Bunney		1								
Bernard Leach			1	4	3	4	6	2	2	5
W.S. Mycock			3							
Gwladys Rogers			1							
Staite Murray			8				2		2	1
Dora Lunn						3		2		
Reginald Wells						8		2	3	
Stella Crofts						2		1		
Ashtead Potters Ltd						5				
Henry T. Wyse						1		1		
Ethiel Sleigh						1				
J Lawson Peecey						1				
Dora Billington							1			4
Francis Richards							3		3	
Stanley Thorogood							1		1	
Michael Cardew								2		
Erna Marners								1		
Henry & D Wren								6	3	
T. Parsons									2	1
Sybil Finnemore									2	
Lily Norton										2
Constance Wade										1
K.Pleydell-Bouverie										3
Nora Braden										3
Yearly Total	0	1	13	4	3	25	13	17	18	20

Editors: Geoffrey Holme 1920-29
S. B. Wainwright 1925-29

Studio Pottery Illustrated in Studio Year-Book 1930-1940

	1930	1932	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
T. Parsons	5										
Sybil Finnemore	5	1									
Dora Braden	3										
Philip Boydell	1										
Rosemary Wilson	1										
W. B. Dalton	1										
Deborah N. Harding	1										
Dorothy W. Gow	1										
Winifred Gilbert	1										
Honorah French	1										
Bernard Leach	4	1	1					4			
K. Pleydell Bouverie	1										
Staite Murray	2		1								
Lily Wilfred Norton	1										
Michael Cardew	3										
Muriel Bell (Leach)	3										
Stella Croft	1										
Lucie Rie	5										
C. Twemlow	2										
Leach Pottery								2			
Yearly Total	42	1	2	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0

Eds: Geoffrey Holme & S. B. Wainwright 1930
Geoffrey Holme 1931-

Exhibition of English Pottery Old & New, V & A , 1935

Illustrated Studio Pottery and related work

	Number of pots
Bernard Leach	8
Staite Murray	7
Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie	6
Nora Braden	6
Deborah Harding	6
W. B. Dalton	3
Michael Cardew	3
1 Antique Oriental Stonewares	13
2 Medieval, Tudor & Staffordshire Slipware	7
3 C. H. Brannam & Co. Ltd, Barnstaple	1
4 Decorated by Dora Billington	4

1 Chinese, Korean & Siamese pottery 13 & 14th centuries

3 Contemporary thrown earthenware jug

4 Meakin Pottery, Hanley & unspecified dish

List of journals researched

Apollo :
A Journal of the Arts for Connoisseurs & Collectors

12 issues per year

Jan-June	1925	Vol 1
July-Dec	1925	Vol 2
"	1926	Vol 3
"	1926	Vol 4
"	1927	Vol 5
"	1927	Vol 6
"	1928	Vol 7
"	1928	Vol 8
"	1929	Vol 9
"	1929	Vol 10
"	1930	Vol 11
"	1930	Vol 12
"	1931	Vol 13
"	1931	Vol 14
"	1932	Vol 15
"	1932	Vol 16
"	1933	Vol 17
"	1933	Vol 18
"	1934	Vol 19
"	1934	Vol 20
"	1935	Vol 21
"	1935	Vol 22
"	1936	Vol 23
"	1936	Vol 24
"	1937	Vol 25
"	1937	Vol 26
"	1938	Vol 27
"	1938	Vol 28
"	1939	Vol 29
"	1939	Vol 30
"	1940	Vol 40

The Arts and Crafts Quarterly

12 issues per year

Vol 1	No 1	Jan	1925
"	No 2	Apr	1925
"	No 3	July	1925
"	No 4	Oct	1925
"	No 5	Dec	1925
"	No 6	Mar	1926
"	No 7	June	1926
"	No 8	Sept	1926
"	No 9	Dec	1926
"	No 10	Mar	1927

The Arts & Crafts

Vol 2	No 1	May	1927
"	No 2	June	"
"	No 3	July	"
"	No 4	Aug	"
"	No 5	Sept	"
"	No 6	Oct	"
"	No 7	Nov	"
"	No 8	Dec	"
"	No 9	Jan	1928

The Arts & Crafts (New Series)

Vol 1	No 1	Apr	1928	
"	No 2	May	"	
"	No 3	Jun	"	
"	No 4	Jul	"	
"	No 5	Aug	"	
"	No 6	Sept	"	Ceased publishing

Artwork

4 issues per year

Vol 1	No 1	July	1924	
"	No 2	Oct-Dec	1924	
"	No 3	Jan-Apr	1925	
"	No 4	May-Aug	1925	
Vol 2	No 5	Oct-Dec	1925	
"	No 6	Jan-Mar	1926	
"	No 7	Summer	1926	
"	No 8	Dec-Feb	1926	
Vol 3	No 9	Winter	1926	
"	No 10	Spring	1927	
"	No 11	Summer	1927	
"	No 12	Autumn	1927	
Vol 4	No 13	Winter	1927	
"	No 14	Spring	1928	
"	No 15	Summer	1928	
"	No 16	Winter	1928	
Vol 5	No 17	Spring	1929	
"	No 18	Summer	1929	
"	No 19	Autumn	1929	
"	No 20	Winter	1929	
Vol 6	No 21	Spring	1930	
"	No 22	Summer	1930	
"	No 23	Autumn	1930	
"	No 24	Winter	1930	
Vol 7	No 25	Spring	1931	
"	No 26	Summer	1931	
"	No 27	Autumn	1931	
"	No 28	Winter	1931	Ceased publishing

The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs

12 issues per year

Apr-Sept	1909	Vol 15
Oct-Mar	1909/10	Vol 16
"	1910	Vol 17
"	1910/11	Vol 18
"	1911	Vol 19
"	1911/12	Vol 20
"	1912	Vol 21
"	1912/13	Vol 22
"	1913	Vol 23
"	1913/14	Vol 24
"	1914	Vol 25
"	1914/15	Vol 26
"	1915	Vol 27
"	1915/16	Vol 28
Apr-Dec	1916	Vol 29
Jan-Jun	1917	Vol 30
Jul-Dec	1917	Vol 31
"	1918	Vol 32
"	1918	Vol 33
"	1919	Vol 34
"	1919	Vol 35
"	1920	Vol 36
"	1920	Vol 37
"	1921	Vol 38
"	1921	Vol 39
"	1922	Vol 40
"	1922	Vol 41
"	1923	Vol 42
"	1923	Vol 43
"	1924	Vol 44
"	1924	Vol 45
"	1925	Vol 46
"	1925	Vol 47
"	1926	Vol 48
"	1926	Vol 49
"	1927	Vol 50
July-Dec	1927	Vol 51
Jan-Jun	1928	Vol 52
"	1928	Vol 53
"	1929	Vol 54
"	1929	Vol 55
"	1930	Vol 56
"	1930	Vol 57
"	1931	Vol 58
"	1931	Vol 59
"	1932	Vol 60
"	1932	Vol 61
"	1933	Vol 62
"	1933	Vol 63
"	1934	Vol 64
"	1934	Vol 65
"	1935	Vol 66
"	1935	Vol 67
"	1936	Vol 68
"	1936	Vol 69
"	1937	Vol 70
"	1937	Vol 71
"	1938	Vol 72
"	1938	Vol 73
"	1939	Vol 74
"	1939	Vol 75
"	1940	Vol 76

The Connoisseur. An illustrated Magazine for Connoisseurs

12 issues per year

Jan	-Apr	1910	Vol XXVI
May	-Aug	1910	Vol XXVII
Sep	-Dec	1910	Vol XXVIII
	"	1911	Vol XXIX
	"	1911	Vol XXX
	"	1911	Vol XXXI
	"	1912	Vol XXXII
	"	1912	Vol XXXIII
	"	1912	Vol XXXIV
	"	1913	Vol XXXV
	"	1913	Vol XXXVI
	"	1913	Vol XXXVII
	"	1914	Vol XXXVIII
	"	1914	Vol XXXIX
	"	1914	Vol XL
	"	1915	Vol XLI
	"	1915	Vol XLII
	"	1915	Vol XLIII
	"	1916	Vol XLIV
	"	1916	Vol XLV
	"	1916	Vol XLVI
	"	1917	Vol XLVII
	"	1917	Vol XLVIII
	"	1917	Vol XLIX
	"	1918	Vol L
	"	1918	Vol LI
	"	1918	Vol LII
	"	1919	Vol LIII
	"	1919	Vol LIV
	"	1919	Vol LV

The Athenaeum

52 issues per year

Jan -June	1913	Vol 1
July -Dec	1913	Vol 2
Jan -June	1914	Vol 1
July -Dec	1914	Vol 2
Jan -Dec	1916	12 issues per year
Jan -Dec	1917	

Ceased publishing

Design in Industry

Vol 1	Spring	1932	
Vol 2	Autumn	1932	(incorporated into)

Design For To-Day

12 issues per year

Vol 1	No 1	May	1933
"	No 2	June	"
"	No 3	July	"
"	No 4	Aug	"
"	No 5	Sepet	"
"	No 6	Oct	"
"	No 7	Nov	"
"	No 8	Dec	"
Vol II	No 9	Jan	1934
"	No 10	Feb	"
"	No 11	Mar	"
"	No 12	Apr	"
"	No 13	May	"
"	No 14	June	"
"	No 15	July	"
"	No 16	Aug	"
"	No 17	Sept	"
"	No 18	Oct	"
"	No 19	Nov	"
"	No 20	Dec	"
Vol III	No 21	Jan	1935
"	No 22	Feb	"
"	No 23	Mar	"
"	No 24	Apr	"
"	No 25	May	"
Vol III	No 26	June	1934
"	No 27	July	"
"	No 28	Aug	"
"	No 29	Sept	"
"	No 30	Oct	"
"	No 31	Nov	"
"	No 32	Dec	"
Vol IV	No 33	Jan	"
"	No 34	Feb	"
"	No 35	Mar	"
"	No 36	Apr	"
"	No 37	May	"
"	No 38	June	" Ceased publishing__

The Pottery & Glass Trade Review
12 issues per year

Vol XLV	Jan	1920
"	Feb	"
"	Mar	"
"	Apr	"
"	May	"
"	June	"
"	July	"
"	Aug	"
"	Sep	"
"	Oct	"
"	Nov	"
"	Dec	"
Vol XLVI	Jan	1921
"	Feb	"
"	Mar	"
"	Apr	"
"	May	"
"	June	"
"	July	"
"	Aug	"
"	Sep	"
"	Oct	"
"	Nov	"
"	Dec	"
Vol XLVII	Jan	1922
"	Feb	"
"	Mar	"
"	Apr	"
"	May	"
"	June	"
"	July	"
"	Aug	"
"	Sep	"
"	Oct	"
"	Nov	"
"	Dec	"
Vol XLVIII	Jan	1923
"	Feb	"
"	Mar	"
"	Apr	"
"	May	"
"	June	"
"	July	"
"	Aug	"
"	Sep	"
"	Oct	"
"	Dec	"
"	Nov	"
"	Dec	"
Vol XLIX	Jan	1924
"	Feb	"
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"	Apr	"
"	May	"
"	June	"
"	July	"
"	Aug	"
"	Sep	"
"	Oct	"
"	Nov	"
"	Dec	"
Vol L	Jan	1925
"	Feb	"
"	Mar	"
"	Apr	"
"	May	"
"	June	"
"	July	"
"	Aug	"
"	Sep	"
"	Oct	"
"	Nov	"
"	Dec	"
Vol LI	Jan	1926
"	Feb	"
"	Mar	"
"	Apr	"
"	May	"
"	June	"
"	July	"
"	Aug	"
"	Sep	"
"	Oct	"
"	Nov	"
"	Dec	"
Vol LII	Jan	1927
"	Feb	"
"	Mar	"
"	Apr	"
"	May	"
"	June	"
"	July	"
"	Aug	"
"	Sep	"
"	Oct	"
"	Nov	"

The Studio Year Book of Decorative Art

Annual

The Studio Year Book of Decorative Art	1910
" "	1911
" "	1912
" "	1913
" "	1914
" "	1915
" "	1916
" "	1917
" "	1918
" "	1919
" "	1920
" "	1921
" "	1922
" "	1923
" "	1924
" "	1925
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" "	1927
" "	1928
" "	1929
" "	1930
" "	1931
" "	1932
" "	1933
" "	1934
" "	1935
" "	1936
" "	1937
" "	1938
" "	1939
" "	1940

The Studio

12 issues per year

Oct-Jan	1909	Vol 48
Feb-May	1910	Vol 49
June-Sept	1910	Vol 50
"	1910	Vol 51
"	1911	Vol 52
"	1911	Vol 53
"	1911	Vol 54
"	1912	Vol 55
"	1912	Vol 56
"	1912	Vol 57
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"	1913	Vol 59
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"	1914	Vol 62
"	1914	Vol 63
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"	1915	Vol 65
"	1915	Vol 66
"	1916	Vol 67
"	1916	Vol 68
"	1916	Vol 69
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"	1917	Vol 72
"	1918	Vol 73
"	1918	Vol 74
"	1918	Vol 75
"	1919	Vol 76
"	1919	Vol 77
"	1919	Vol 78
Jan-June	1920	Vol 79
July-Dec	1920	Vol 80
"	1921	Vol 81
"	1921	Vol 82
"	1922	Vol 83
"	1922	Vol 84
"	1923	Vol 85
"	1923	Vol 86
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"	1930	Vol 99
"	1930	Vol 100
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1922	May 4	50 Years of London Potters
1923	Nov 1	Hamada exhibition
"	Nov 14	Leach exhibition
1924	Jan 8	Chelsea Town Hall exhibition
"	June 13	Leader
"	Nov 19	Staite Murray exhibition
1925	June 19	Leach exhibition
"	Aug 19	Ashtead Potters
"	Nov 13	Staite Murray & Well's exhibitions
1926	Apr 21	Leach exhibition
"	Sept 17	Article on oil firing
"	Sep 22	Staite Murray letters on oil firing
"	Nov 15	Staite Murray exhibition
1927	Mar 23	Leach exhibitions
"	Apr 21	Murray, W & B Nicholson & Wood exhibition
"	Sept 30	British Pottery at V & A
	Nov 11	Staite Murray exhibition
1928	July 6	Staite Murray & W & B Nicholson exhibition
"	Oct 1	Growing Industry in Rural Areas
"	Nov 3	Cardew & Staite Murray exhibitions
"	Dec 6	Leach exhibition
1929	May 24	Hamada exhibition
"	June 21	Braden & Pleydell-Bouverie exhibition
"	July 14	Kawai exhibition
"	Nov 8	Ashtead potters
"	Nov 23	Murray, Vyses, Hopkins & mixed exhibitions
"	Nov 30	Present Day Potters, Leach & mixed exhibition
1930	Mar 31	Leach exhibition
"	May 22	Braden & Pleydell-Bouverie exhibition
"	Nov 7	Staite Murray exhibition
1931	May 12	Leach & Tomimoto exhibition
"	June 11	Cardew exhibition
"	Oct 29	Leach exhibition
"	Nov 10	Hamada & Staite Murray exhibitions
"	Dec 2	Vyse exhibition
1932	May 32	Braden & Pleydell-Bouverie exhibition
"	Nov 7	Staite Murray exhibition
1933	Sept 13	Poole Pottery exhibition
"	Nov 10	Cardew & Harding exhibitions
	Dec 5	Leach exhibition
1934	April 26	Staite Murray
1935	April 15	V & A Exhibition English Pottery
"	Nov 15	Staite Murray exhibition
"	Dec 19	Vyse exhibition
1936	Apr 25	Leach exhibition
"	Dec 5	Vyse exhibition
"	Dec 16	Mixed exhibitions including Pleydell -Bouverie
1939	Apr 27	Milner-White exhibition

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OLD ENGLISH GLASSES: GROUP 7

is to be found a portrait of "Bonnie Prince Charlie," or a Jacobite motto, *e.g.* "Audentior ibo"; or, again, the countenance of a popular hero, like Admiral Keppel, may be engraved on the drinking vessel of a devoted adherent, but these are rare. Inscriptions indicative of personal predilections, such as "No excise," occur sometimes; coats-of-arms and masonic emblems are more frequent. And though the fashion may not be one to revive, the examples shown in group 6 may fitly be included in an article treating of the artistic aspect of our ancestors' drinking glasses. Each of the three glasses in this group is equally interesting—the one engraved with a ship is inscribed "Success to the *Lyon* Privateer," and carries us back to the days of licensed piracy, when "Portobello was not yet ta'en"; the centre glass is adorned with the device of a burning heart and an ardent sun, with the motto "I elevate what I consume"; while the third bears the Jacobite emblems, in this case without a motto. These specimens are chosen not only for the emblems on the bowls (others even more interesting to the antiquary might have been figured), but as illustrating also the infinite variety in form which is so conspicuous in the glasses of the last century, so lacking in those of to-day. Even if we do not care to proclaim our political sympathies on our wine-glasses now, surely the days of baluster stem and bell bowl, of air screw and gilded decoration are not past for ever? There are good examples still to be found as models, and there are surely plenty of skilled craftsmen in the land, if we will but revolt against the cast-iron mandates of the tasteless fashion which is responsible for the mechanical insipidity of most of our table-glass to-day; and surely it is not too much to hope that the cheering revival of artistry in our other crafts and manufactures, from porcelain to silver, from furniture to books, may extend to our glasses. The material cries aloud for the artist to use it; the models are before us, and the supply will create the demand.

PERCY BATE.

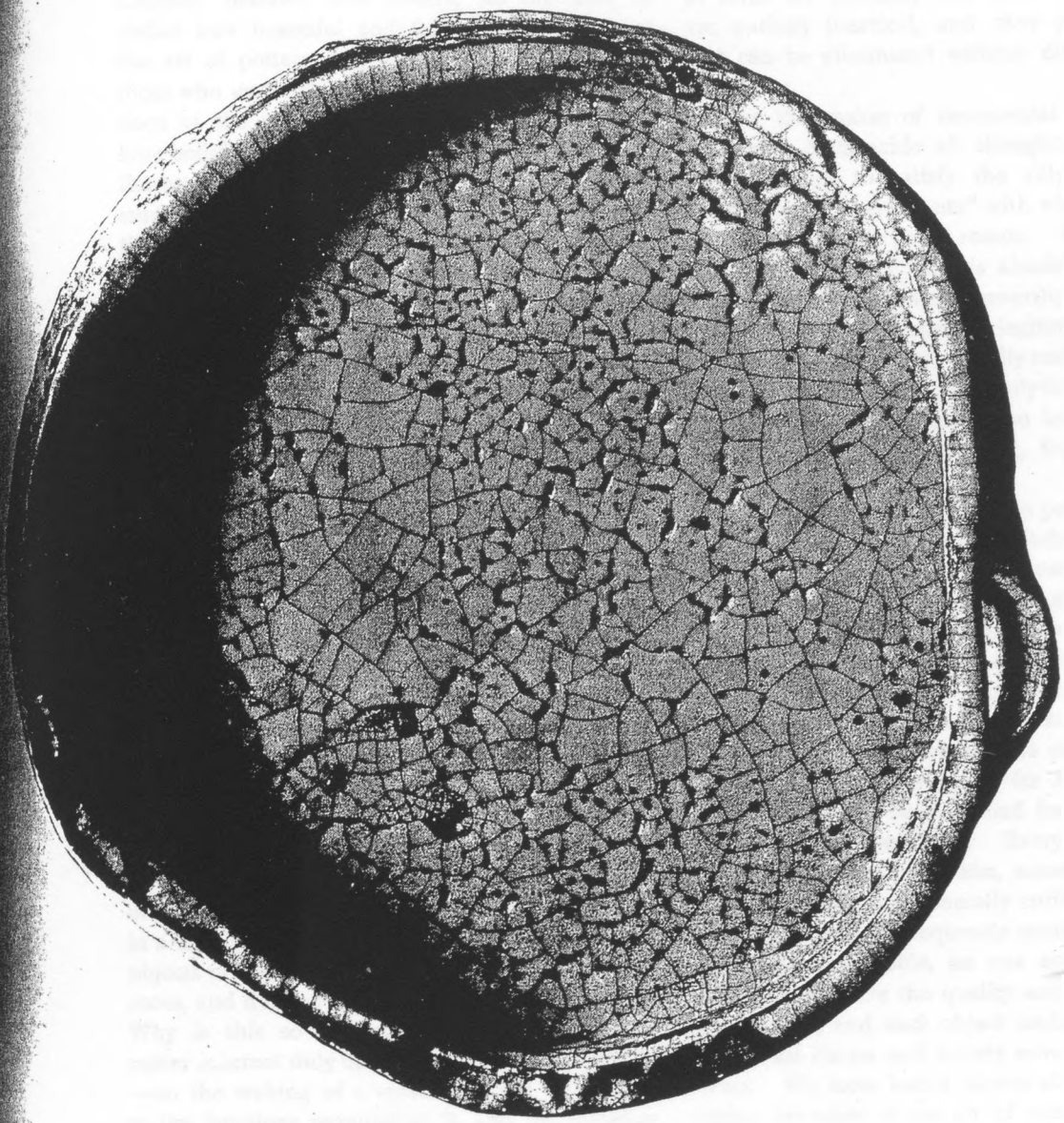
THE POTTER'S ART.—OBJECT LESSONS FROM THE FAR EAST. BY CHARLES HOLME.

IT is evident to those who closely follow the changes that are taking place in the manufacture of the better classes of earthenware that a revolt has set in against objects depending for their sole interest upon the painted decoration applied to them. The true art of the potter, for long almost entirely lost sight of, is becoming better appreciated as it is more fully understood, and the most successful productions of recent days are those in which the potter, by the happy choice and manipulation of his clay and glazes, and his thorough understanding of the mysteries of firing, has rendered himself independent of the painter, or of any other collaborator. But a short while ago it was popularly considered that all objects used for service in the house should, without discrimination, be decorated with painted flowers and birds, and other naturalistic ornament. Furniture, screens, pottery, and even mirrors were disfigured by professional and amateur decorators, and the same *motifs* were repeated by the same process, irrespective of the material to which they were applied. A grosser travesty of art could scarcely be imagined. Pottery, metal and wood have each a style and character of decoration uniquely their own, which are as uninterchangeable as the materials themselves; but the details of each class of design may be subject to an infinity of variation.

The art of the potter is as different from that of the metal worker, the glass blower, or the carpenter, as can well be imagined, and each and all of them are absolutely independent of the painter.

By an examination of recent productions by such artist-potters as Delaherche, Bigot, Chaplet,

The Studio, Vol XXIV, No 103, Oct 1901



VESSEL FOR CUT FLOWERS IN SHINO POTTERY, MADE IN OWARI, JAPAN

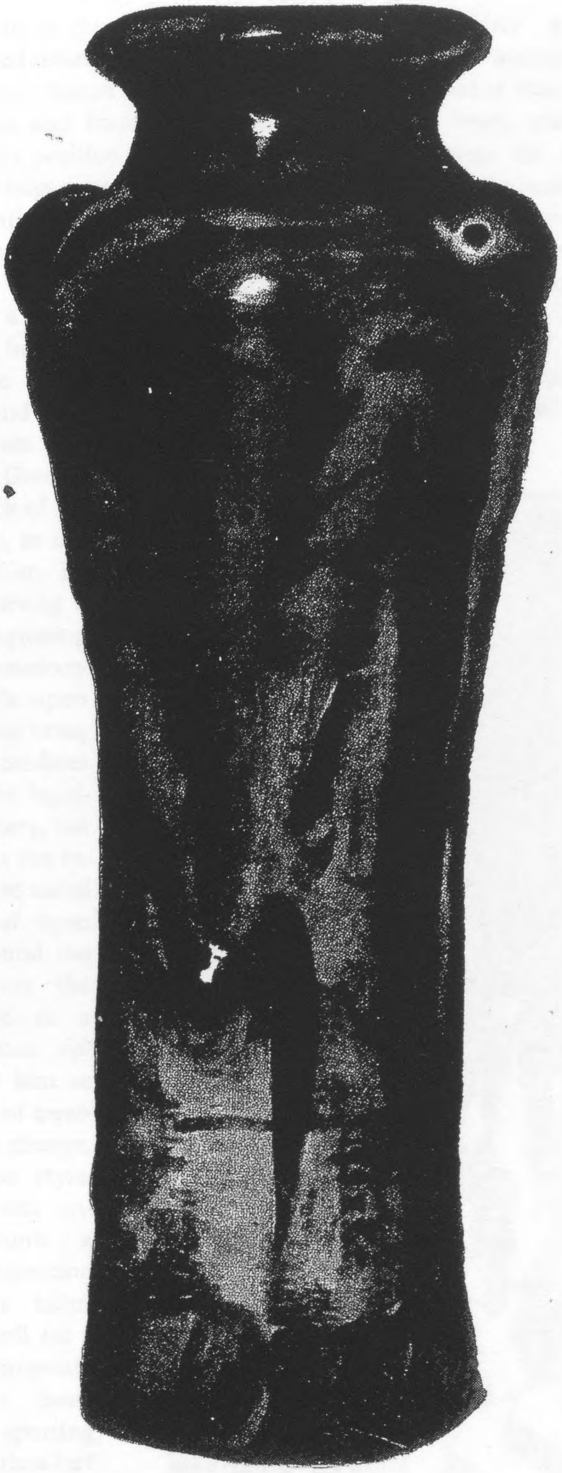
(For description see page 56)

Clément Massier, and others, we are able to realise how beautiful and full of unique interest the art of pottery may become in the hands of those who understand the possibilities and limitations of the craft; but if we desire to be more fully enlightened with regard to the possibilities of the art we cannot do better than make a careful study of the features distinguishing some of the native pottery of China, Corea, and Japan. At the outset, however, let it be understood that we do not refer to objects that have been made exclusively for export, and are sold by grocers and drapers in Europe and America. It is from wares made solely for native use, and especially from those produced under the influence of the *chajin* in Japan that lessons of value may be drawn; for it is these wares which are ethically the most perfect, following as they naturally do in every process of their manufacture the laws most essential to their being.

It has been said, and with a modicum of truth, that Art often exists in her truest form in the works of the handicraftsman, where her presence has least been courted. The worker, intent only upon the perfection of the object for the purpose required, produces unconsciously that which may sometimes be dignified by the name of Art. It is certain that we often find in the peasant pottery of England and France, of Spain and Egypt, made solely for use by the people, certain characteristics of form and colour which satisfy the æsthetic sense in a far higher and purer degree than the decorated objects made for the ornamentation of the drawing-room, and dubbed by the tradesman "art-pottery." Why is this so? Simply because the peasant potter is intent only upon the usefulness of his work —on the making of a vessel that will be adapted to the functions required of it, and he, therefore, adopts every means he can compass to render it as simply serviceable as possible. The beautiful form of the large water-bottle used by dwellers in the Nile valley has been perfected by numberless generations of potters intent upon the same work. Its pointed end, its bulbous form, its narrow neck, the graceful shape of its handles, are the results of continued effort to render it economical and thoroughly practical. It is doubtful if the question of elegance of form ever entered the mind of the potter. But if it did, he certainly never permitted his desire for beauty to prejudice, in the smallest degree, the usefulness of the vessel. The native-made water pitchers used by the villagers of Devonshire, of Western France, and of many another district in Europe, are also beautiful in form for precisely the same reason. They are entirely practical, and they possess nothing that can be eliminated without diminishing their usefulness.

Now the maker of ornamental "art pottery" frequently casts aside all thoughts of usefulness in his desire to satisfy the silly craving after unornamental "ornaments" with which thoughtless people crowd their living rooms. The result, from an artistic point of view, is absolutely disastrous. The objects he makes are unworthy the efforts of a craftsman, and they satisfy no legitimate demands of æstheticism whatsoever. Badly made of unsuitable clay, imperfectly glazed, carelessly fired, covered with painted-work which displays no knowledge of the requirements of decorative art, they are intrinsically valueless.

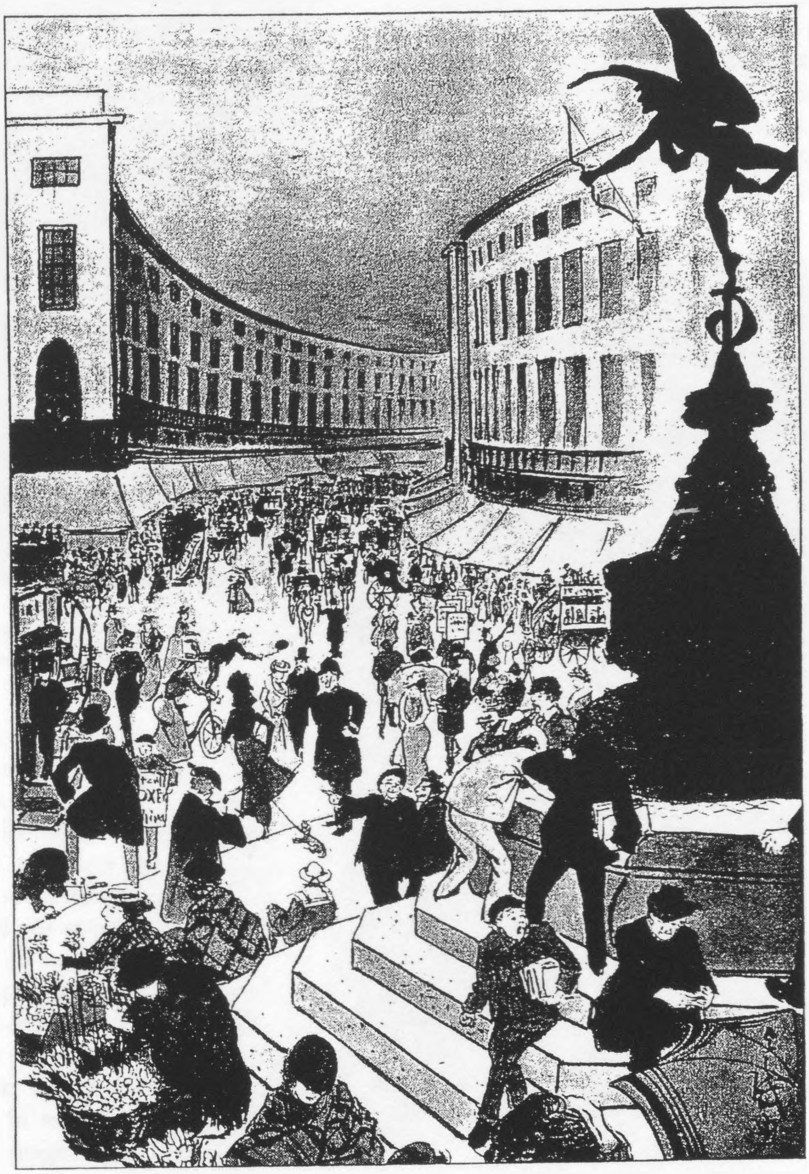
"But, what will you?" says the potter; "Egyptian waterbottles and Devonshire pitchers are in little or no demand in the modern house." This may be granted. The work, then, before us is to discover that which is refined and legitimate in the potter's craft, in order that we may thoroughly master the nature of its excellencies and apply the principles to the manufacture of those objects for which there is a demand. Nowhere has the craft been carried to such perfection as in the far East. There, its every process has been studied for centuries under the most ideal conditions. Every potter of ability became a master craftsman, sometimes sharing a kiln with others, but generally entirely independent of outside help. Frequently under the patronage of a prince or noble, he was encouraged in his efforts to improve the quality and character of his productions, and each object made by him had an individual charm and beauty never attained in the West. We have learnt almost all we know of the higher branches of the art of pottery-making from the far East. Our best productions are but imitations of Chinese methods. But, if we have learnt much, there is still more of the greatest possible interest awaiting our investigation. The peasant-pottery of the East is even more fascinating than that of the West; and there are also many examples made by, or under the influence and guidance of men of the highest knowledge and taste in artistic matters, which, in their simplicity, may bear some outward resemblance to village pottery, but which, upon careful examination, show such marvels of technical knowledge in manufacture and dexterity of manipulation as to place them at once in the highest rank of ceramic art. Village pottery, however good, does not entirely fulfil the demands of cultured taste. A higher order of intellect than



is usually to be found in the peasant craftsman is necessary for the production of works of art; but there is, of course, no reason why the peasant, if endowed with genius and knowledge of his craft, should not rise to the position of a great master.

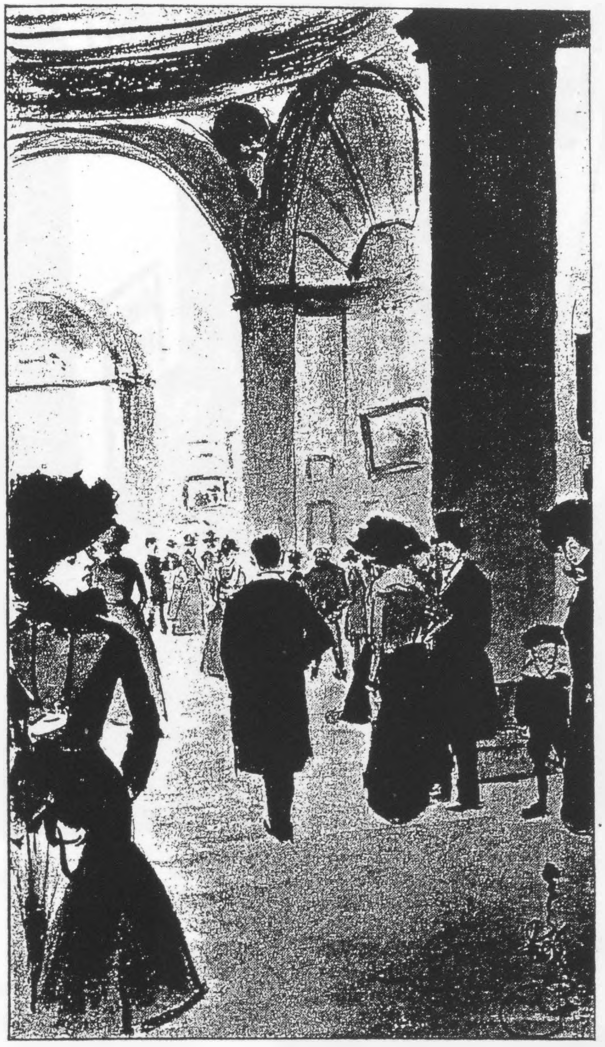
The two greatest impediments to progress in the potter's art are imitation and love of display. The first thing a potter asks himself when he gets a mass of clay into his hands is, "What shall I imitate?" If it be a flower-vase that he is about to make, then, as befitting such a dainty subject, he fancies that the form should be elegant and beautiful in line and contour, and his thoughts turn to the amphoræ and cratæ of the ancient Greeks. If he makes the neck of his vase a little longer, or the body a trifle bulkier, he imagines he is evolving a new form of surpassing merit. As the monotony of Greek forms palls upon him, he tries Persian ones, and by no means confines his attention to the legitimate shapes of pottery, but glories especially in the reproduction of pierced metal designs. A rim of open arabesque work round the neck, which renders the vase unserviceable as a receptacle for water, appeals especially to him as a beautiful method of treatment. Then, for a change, he tries the Italian style. A nautilus shell with enamelled metal mounts; a female figure representing a mermaid with a bifurcated acanthus scroll for a tail, makes an appropriate handle; while a base, designed with sporting dolphins with acanthus-leaf capes upon their backs, is in keeping with the rest. This he makes in pottery, and paints and gilds as nearly like the original as possible, and exhibits it at an International Exhibition as a work of art! When, some thirty years ago, the importation of Japanese manufactures began to assume importance, many beautiful objects in porcelain, earthenware, ivory, enamel, carved wood, and bamboo were seen for the first time, and were eagerly imitated by some of the great English and French potters—the remarkable feature of the imitations being that they were principally confined to articles in bronze, ivory and bamboo, the reproduction of pottery articles being but rarely attempted.

The love of display, so ingrained in Western character, is responsible for the tawdry and vulgar bedizenment of our earthenware vessels. Flower-



"PICCADILLY CIRCUS" BY YOSHIO MARKINO

(See London Studio-Talk)



"IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY" BY YOSHIO MARKINO
(See London Studio-Talk)

painting upon porcelain! There is a halo of enchantment round the very thought of it in the minds of many people. And yet, what sins have been committed in its name! That a flower vase should be complete, or in any sense worthy of its function, without some naturalistic floral decoration upon it, would not enter the minds of many worthy people.

To consider the true purpose and function of the flower vase, and so to construct and complete it that it shall answer its purpose of holding and displaying cut flowers to the greatest possible advantage, is a subject to which but very few European potters have deigned to turn their attention. The old country dame still likes best to see her roses in the old willow-pattern bowl, and her gilliflowers or daffodils in the ancient Toby jug—but then she lives in a world of the past, as may be seen from the arrangement of her cottage interior, with its red brick floor, its open fire-place, its old oak chest, long-case clock, rush-bottom chairs, and the short white dimity blinds to its diamond-pane windows. The latest productions from the great Staffordshire and Sèvres kilns are not for her, and she heeds not the passing of fashion. But, perhaps, as we come to consider the canons of good taste in ceramics, the old lady will not be found to be so far wrong after all in the selection of her flower vases from her limited store.

For what are the first considerations to be borne in mind by the potter in the making of vessels suitable for the display of flowers? Not only must they be made capable of holding water without allowing it to percolate through, but care must be taken that, by contrast of texture and colour, they do

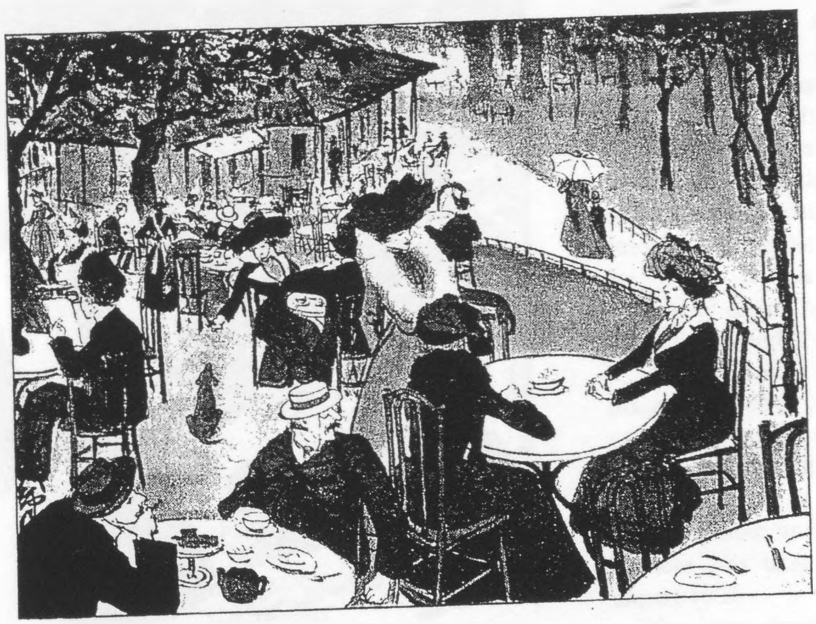
"A LONDON STREET" BY YOSHIO MARKINO
(See London Studio-Talk)

"PIT ENTRANCE OF HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE" BY YOSHIO MARKINO
(See London Studio-Talk)

not vie with the flowers placed in them, but rather that they shall enhance their beauty. Like the Egyptian water-bottle and the Devonshire pitcher, they must be entirely adapted to the uses to which it is intended they shall be put. Their function is a subordinate one, and it is manifestly unfitting that they should ape the forms and outward appearance of objects intended for other purposes.

In considering the form a flower vase should take we have first to decide what class of flower it is intended to hold. We may reasonably wish to see the flower placed in the position it assumes when growing. Consequently a receptacle suitable for the display of a water-lily would be ill-adapted for holding a rose, and one in which a crocus would look its best could not be expected to carry a branch of almond blossom becomingly. Differences of form are, therefore, essential as well as differences of style.

The Japanese have a charming method of displaying flowers whose natural abode is upon the banks of a pond or stream, or in the water itself. They select a vessel of the shape more or less of a very shallow tub—indeed, a specially made shallow wooden tub, covered with black lacquer, is often used for the purpose. This they fill to the brim with water. The water flowers are arranged in it by means of certain metal or wooden attachments, so as to assume a natural appearance. The imitation of Nature, however, is not carried further than is necessary to secure a beautiful effect. It may readily be imagined that water

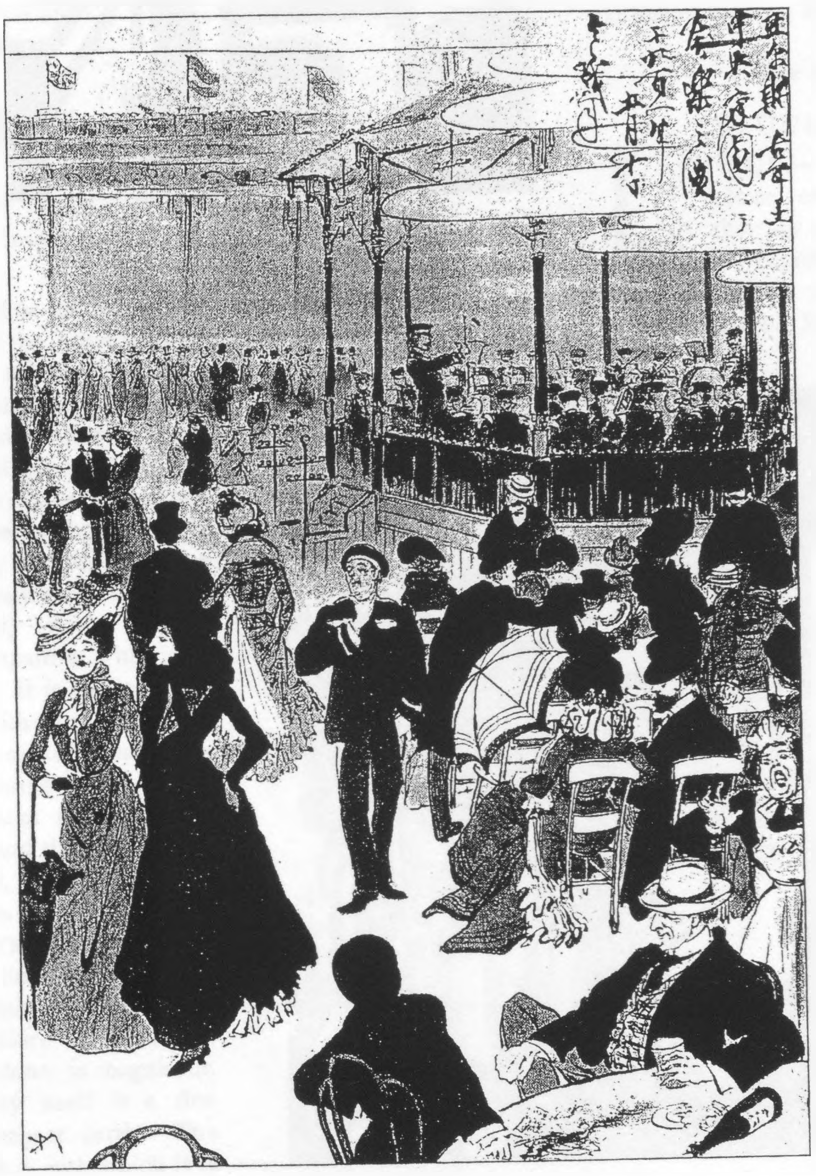


"TEA HOUSE, KENSINGTON GARDENS" BY YOSHIO MARKINO
(See London Studio-Talk)

lilies displayed resting upon the water and reflected therein are infinitely more gratifying to behold than when tied closely together in bunches and placed in a narrow-neck Worcester or Sèvres, or any other highly decorated vase.

An Owari potter, in his efforts to make an earthenware vessel adapted to such a purpose, produced the form shown upon page 49. This piece is fashioned in a style stated to have originated with Shino, a famous æsthete, who lived about A.D. 1700.

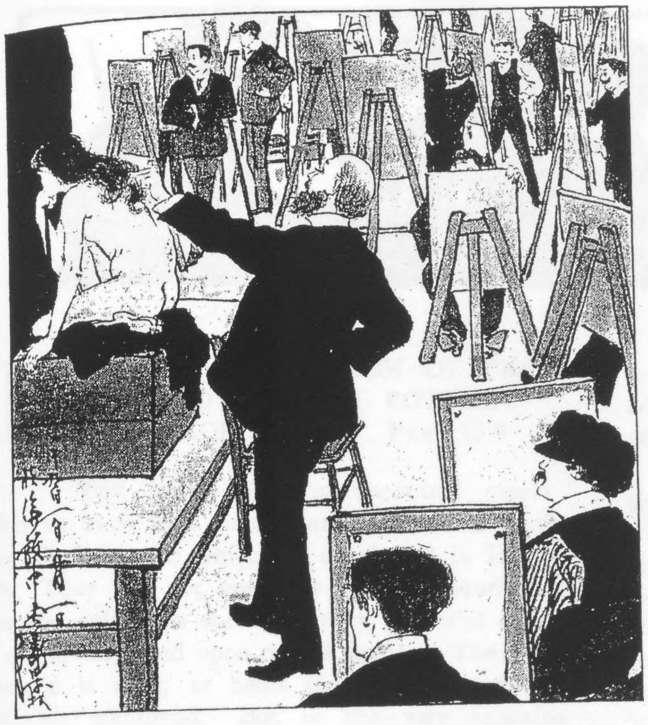
It is simply a piece of earth modelled by hand into the desired form. It is unsymmetrical in shape, because symmetry in this instance was not required. Ponds and puddles are not symmetrical. In covering the vessel with glaze to render it impervious to water a heavy white enamel was employed, which was allowed to run unevenly and to separate itself in the kiln by a method known only to the potter. The effect obtained is such as when filled with water the bottom appears to be strewn with small quartz pebbles. This, of course, is intentional, because when the flowers are arranged in the metal holder, which rests upon the bottom of the vessel, the metal is covered over with a little heap of pebbles, which hides it from view; and the pebbles harmonise with the glazing of the dish, and are not unduly prominent. The rim of the dish is slightly inclined inward towards its edge, so that when carried full of water the liquor cannot be readily spilt. The little spout at the side for emptying the vessel is so formed that it does not project beyond the body, and so is less liable to be chipped than would otherwise be the case. There is no mistaking what the object is made of. It does not simulate a wooden tub, neither is it made to imitate bronze or ivory or even porcelain. It is, frankly, earthenware — that, and nothing more. It makes no pretence to be in itself ornamental. Its beauty is only realised when it is actually serving the purpose for which it was made. But every detail has been carefully thought out, and it may worthily take its place with the Egyptian water-bottle and the Devonshire jug, with the added interest which a highly-skilled potter and a true æsthete has been able to impart to it.



"EARL'S COURT EXHIBITION" BY YOSHIO MARKINO

(See London Studio-Talk)

The form shown in the coloured illustration is also of Owari make, and is



"A LIFE CLASS" BY YOSHIO MARKINO

produced in the manner known as Oribé, from the name of the artist who originated the style. It is adapted only for the display of an extremely simple arrangement of flowers, such as would be used on the occasion of a tea ceremony. The vase has been slightly cracked, and one of the protuberances or "ears," damaged, both defects being repaired with gold lacquer. It is fashioned by hand with the help of a wooden spatula, and without recourse to the wheel. The marks made by the fingers and the spatula are retained, but not obtrusively so. It is essentially a potter's piece. Its real beauty lies in the success of certain processes of manufacture of which the potter alone is cognisant. The clay itself is a fine and compact earth. The underglaze with which it is partly covered is manipulated in a strange manner with great skill; and the soft green overglaze, with its splashes of blue and purple, is a poem of sweet harmonious colour. The richness of the overglaze is rendered still more effective by contrast with the dull earth and the partial underglaze. The very roughness of the pot thus contributes to its value. No machine-like perfection of form, no hardness and rigidity of outline, no floral nor other painted subjects are to be found in or upon it.

But it is, nevertheless, a witness of art applied to the potter's craft, for the counterpart of which we may seek in vain among the works of many of the great potters of modern Europe.

CHARLES HOLME.

(*To be continued.*)

STUDIO-TALK.

LONDON.—Mr. Yoshio Markino, whose entertaining character-sketches of London outdoor life are reproduced this month, is a young Japanese artist, and his work shows clearly the influence of European methods on

"MORNING AND EVENING:" COLOURED RELIEF BY JAMES R. COOPER

THE SOLON COLLECTION OF PRE-WEDGWOOD ENGLISH POTTERY BY THE COLLECTOR Part II.*

The series of "slip decorated pieces" takes us back to a much earlier period than the English delft with which we concluded in December. They are not unworthy of the attention of one who values, in ancient pottery, powerful effects of colour displayed upon robust shapes. The workmanship is rude, as befits the coarseness of the materials employed. But in the very selection of these native clays and metallic ores, made use of almost in their natural state; in the decorative instinct which has guided the untutored hand of the potter, bent on embellishing his work to the best of his ability, we find a technical soundness coupled with an originality of treatment seldom to be seen in an equal degree upon earthen pots of such a modest order.

In the early Staffordshire pot works the process of slip decoration seems to have long been employed in preference to all others. The "slip" was made by diluting clay with water into the consistency of a batter. By pouring out the liquid through a quill into cursive jets or separate dots upon the surface of the piece to be decorated, fanciful traceries were formed, the colour of which contrasted with that of the ground. Highly conventional flowers, heraldic devices, and grotesque figures constituted the stock of ornamental motives at the disposal of the slip decorator. The particular pieces for the adornment of which he reserved his most ambitious efforts were the Tyg and the Show-dish.

The Tyg was an antique institution in Staffordshire, its name being derived from the Saxon *Tigel*. This vessel was used to brew the *posset* on festive occasions. It was provided with three, four, or more sets of handles, so when it stood in the centre of the table the guest whose turn it was to drink out of it could take hold of the Tyg by the handle that was in front of him (No. i.). When intended for presentation, the pot was "slipped on" round the rim with the Christian name and surname of the party—generally a good housewife—to whom it was dedicated (No. ii.); the broad letters of the inscription, studded over with minute dots, formed the most effective part of the decoration. The ingenious dispositions of the handles were modified according to the fancy of the maker; some of their numberless varieties are illustrated in my collection.

The Show-dishes, as they may be called—for they displayed a style of decoration so elaborate as to make them, surely, too good for use—were, as a rule, presentation pieces, and had, perhaps, a special destination. In Germany, large dishes of the same period were called "wedding dishes." In the wedding festivities of the middle class the dish was placed upon a table at the entrance of the banqueting-room. As they came in, all the guests were expected to deposit into it such sums of money as they chose to contribute towards the cost of the entertainment and the benefit of the newly-married couple.

No. I.—STAFFORDSHIRE TYG

* Part I. appeared in The Connoisseur for December, 1901.

The same custom prevailed in England for a long time.

A common potter of no better or worse ability than the majority of his mates, has, however, made his name almost famous in ceramic history by affixing it very frequently upon the works of his hand (No. v.). Thomas Toft long worked in the Potteries—the name is still a common one in the district—but we have good cause to believe that, like many of his brother-craftsmen, he tried his fortunes in more than one place. It is not possible to localise the spot on which his signed dishes were made; all we can say is that the greater number of them have been found on the borders of North Wales, where common pottery was extensively made at the time. A real "nest" of these dishes may be seen in Chirk Castle, near Ruabon, where they have remained undisturbed ever since they left the makers' workshop. They comprise 2 Thomas Toft, 1 Ralph Toft, 2 Charles Toft, 5 Ralph Simpson, 1 William Taylor, and a few unsigned ones. The conclusion one may draw from the presence of so many specimens in a castle, the owner of which had certainly not collected them for the love of their uncouth look, is that they were the tribute in kind that the potters of the neighbourhood had, according to a long-established custom, to present once a year to the Lord of the Manor. Chirk Castle was the seat of Sir Thomas Middleton, Lord Mayor of London at the time of the Revolution. The subject represented upon one of the dishes is King Charles in the tree, flanked right and left with the lion and the unicorn; in this we see a direct homage to the staunch loyalty from which Sir Thomas Middleton never swerved at the most critical moments of his life.

No. II.—STAFFORDSHIRE TYG

Slip decorated cradles (No. iii.) were occasionally made and inscribed with big letters as christening presents. Drinking jugs and mugs, having had to stand a free use, are now rarely met with; the one in my collection is one of the very few that have survived rough treatment.

At a later period decoration was no longer left to the fancy of the workman. Into the form upon which the clay was to be pressed to the shape of a dish, the ornamental subject was engraved in a broad outline, which, of course, came out in relief upon the piece. The remaining part of the work was simply to fill with coloured slips the fields marked out by the raised lines (No. vi.). Such a process admitted of an unlimited reproduction of the same subject, and we find, consequently, many replicas of the same dish.

Marbling the surface with slips of contrasting colours was generally adopted in the manufacture of popular ware. Narrow bands of yellow and brown colour were trailed through a quill upon the clay still in the wet state; then with a piece of leather, indented at the edge, the horizontal stripes were combed down in a vertical direction, after the method still used for "graining" by the house-painter. I have often heard old inhabitants of the Potteries say that, in the time of their grandfather, there was scarcely one piece of household crockery, in town or country, which was not marbled in that manner. At the present day, excavations made on

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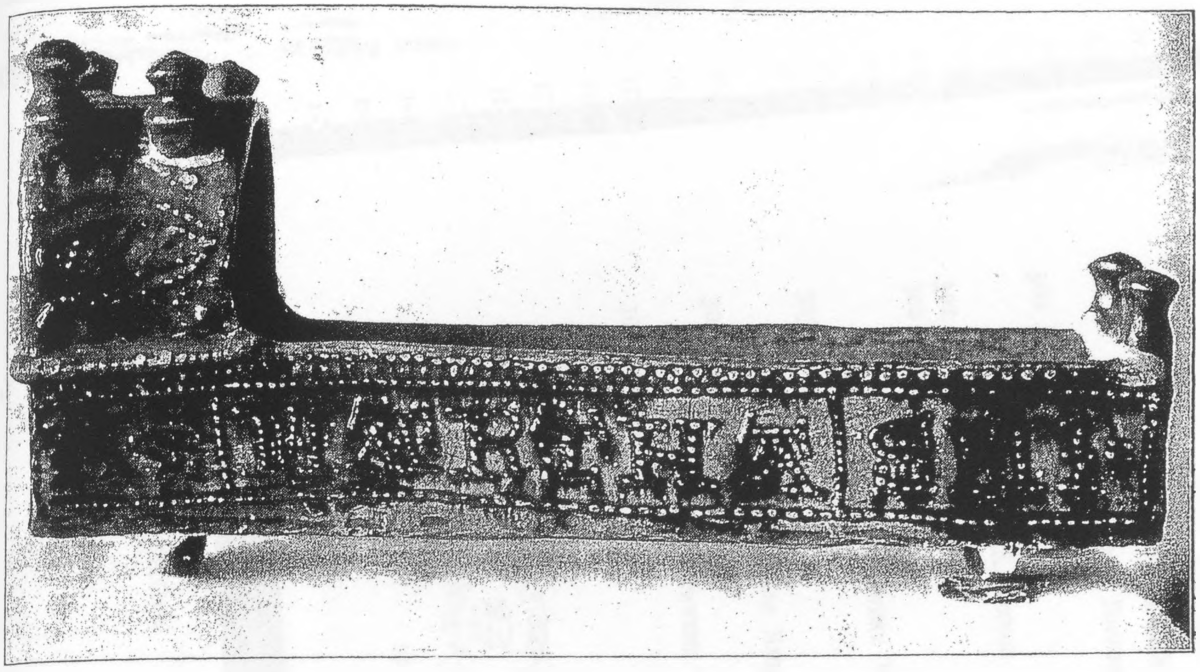

No. III.—SLIP DECORATED CRADLE.

No. IV.—ELERS WARE.

END GALLERY

SCULPTURE

CHARLES RICKETTS

300 Paolo and Francesca

K. BRUCE

301 W. B. Yeats
302 Granville Barker

F. DERWENT WOOD

303 Samson and Delilah

CHARLES RICKETTS

304 Silence

F. DERWENT WOOD

305 Leda

184

185 KESWICK

186 S. MARIA DELLA SALUTE VENICE

187 THE HILLS ABOVE NICE

GRAFTON GALLERIES
GRAFTON ST., BOND ST., W.

MANET AND THE POST-IMPRESSIONISTS

NOV. 8TH TO JAN. 15TH
1910–11
10 A.M. TO 6 P.M.

(UNDER REVISION)

PRICE ONE SHILLING

END GALLERY

HENRI MATISSE

198 Dessin, Jeune Femme
(*Lent by M. Alphonse Kann*)

MARQUET

199 Dessin
(*Lent by E. Galeries Druet*)

P. GIRIEUD

200 Dessin
(*Lent by Galeries E. Druet*)

FLANDRIN

201 Dessin
(*Lent by E. Galeries Druet*)

LAPRADE

202 Dessin
(*Lent by Galeries E. Druet*)

203 Dessin

HENRI MATISSE

204 Drawing
(*Lent by Mrs. Chadbourne*)

P. SIGNAC

205 Pastel

206 Dessin
(*Lent by Galeries E. Druet*)

BRONZE AND POTTERY

ARISTIDE MAILLOL

1 Femme aux bras levés — *Terrecuite*
(*Lent by Galeries E. Druet*)

END GALLERY

HENRI MATISSE

2 Le Serf
(*Lent by the Artist*)

VLAMINCK

3 Vase de faience

4 Vase de faience
(*Lent by the Artist*)

DERAIN

5 Vase de faience
(*Lent by Galeries E. Druet*)

HENRI MATISSE

6 Buste d'enfant
(*Lent by the Artist*)

ARISTIDE MAILLOL

7 Femme sans bras
(*Lent by M. Vollard*)

DERAIN

8 Vase en faience
(*Lent by Galeries E. Druet*)

GIRIEUD

9 Vase en faience
(*Lent by Galeries E. Druet*)

HENRI MATISSE

10 Vase en faience
(*Lent by Galeries E. Druet*)

11 Fillette debout — *Bronze*
(*Lent by the Artist*)

END GALLERY

ARISTIDE MAILLOL

12 Femme avec un bras
(Lent by M. Vollard)

HENRI MATISSE

13 Femme accroupie — *Bronze*
(Lent by the Artist)

14 Femme s'appuyant sur les mains — „
(Lent by the Artist)

15 Femme couchée — „
(Lent by the Artist)

ARISTIDE MAILLOL

16 Femme assise — „
(Lent by M. Vollard)

VLAMINCK

17 Vase en faience

O. FRIESZ

18 Vase fond jaune

P. GIRIEUD

19 Vase fond jaune
(Lent by Galeries E. Druet)

HENRI MATISSE

20 Torse — *Bronze*

ARISTIDE MAILLOL

21 Femme baissée — „
(Lent by M. Vollard)

HENRI MATISSE

22 Buste de jeune fille — „

Maillol Torso
Bron[redacted]

Matisse Terracotta 2
Bronze 6
Vase 1

Derain vase 2

Vlaminck vase 3

Friesz vase 1

Girieud vase 2

spread. The woods retreat, the stream runs through the village to the meadows, above which are the rolling cornfields of the opening valley, closed along the western sky with more tree-crowned heights. The houses are mere whitewashed boxes, roofed with grey stone, and, generally, with dormer windows. The church is a mean one, but somewhat in the character of a Swiss church, and thus in keeping with the larch woods about. There is no hope of presenting it to the reader as he would come down the lane from the main road by the staircase of the woods, and see and hear and feel the beauty of our village through the greenery of the beeches.

There is no rookery in our village. Its immediate churchyard and most others, too, can be beaten within ten miles of London, at Theydon Garnon, in Essex. Martins are not particularly numerous or picturesque, but, if you want those, come two miles away and see their nests making a continuous cornice along the eaves, which are so low that a tall man could touch them with his hands. Martinville is rather high and dry. In another village not far away, the live water spouts from a stone crocodile at the head of the street, down the side of which it sparkles, with deepened basins at intervals, whence the people dip out crystal pailfuls. In the other direction, we discovered, in a bicycle run ane day last summer, a string of villages, all highly beautiful. Coming down a long steep hill, thoughtfully labelled as the scene of "many accidents, one fatal," we came to Avening scattered up the slope away from the road, its pretty church in the midst of a family of houses. Up out of Avening, and soon after, down through a perfect cloister of beech woods, to Sapperton mill, with church and village high on the opposite bank looking at the matchless valley. Then on to Daglingworth, whose stream, almost a river, runs through orchards and past houses well bowered in gardens. We passed through three other villages that day, and were within reach of twice as many more, none of them improvable by a demolition or an addition, each with some feature of the ideal that the other had not, each worthy of many votes in an election for the most beautiful village in England.

The gazetteer identifies, of course, the writer's land of beautiful villages. The names had to be given because they are beautiful as the places. There are not eighty Avenings in England, and it is permissible to think that none but a beautiful village could secure that name. We doubt whether there are innately ugly villages with beautiful names. There are unlucky villages, like crystal-streamed Bishopstoke, that have had their charms spoilt by some great blacksmith's shop of civilisation. It is the hamlets amid the hills that are especially able to escape that fate. The hills name them, if not in the first name, then with some pretty descriptive affix, such as Stow-in-the-Wold, or Bourton-on-the-Water. Our village of the stone crocodile is called Compton-Abdale, as pretty a name as any novelist could invent. Swalecliffe is a magnificently churched and romantic village (though upon the high road), almost at the centre of England. The beauty of its name is partly apparent, partly the secret of its intimate friends, for its pronunciation is Swaycliffe. Havering is within a cannon shot of London, though its almost ideal village green has to be discovered by excursion from the beaten track. In case its mere name should not be pretty enough, it has for full description Havering-atte-Bower. Sutton, perhaps, is a beautiful name. Many of the Suttons have extra names. Possibly the most charming of all these villages would be discovered by searching the gazetteer. It would be far more interesting to take pilgrimage to the whole eighty-eight and see which, if any, is "the most charming village in the country."

Art.

THE POST-IMPRESSIONISTS.—II.

In my first article I tried to urge one or two points of general consideration about the group of painters shown at the Grafton Galleries. I will now try to discuss the artists separately. And first let me admit, in reply to the flamboyant diatribes of those who wish to see me burned together with the pictures which I arranged with such effrontery to insult the British public, that the collection is far from being perfect as an expression of this movement in art. Anyone who has tried to collect so large a body of pictures in a short time will know how many accidental obstacles occur to prevent one's getting just those pictures on which one has most set one's heart, and how often in despair one has to accept a less perfect example of such and such an artist. One kindly critic is quite right in saying that there are too many Gauguins, and that there are Van Gogh's which it would have been most desirable to add. Then again, Matisse, owing to the absence of a well-known collector, is quite inadequately represented, and Picasso should have been seen in bigger and more ambitious works. But at least the exhibition has given an opportunity to the British public to judge of a great movement of which it had hitherto remained in almost total ignorance, and it has given Sir W. B. Richmond the opportunity to express publicly his shame at bearing the designation of artist. That is perhaps even more than one had ventured to hope.

Another confession—the Manets are not, on the whole, good examples, and perhaps establish an unfair comparison with Cézanne. I always admired Cézanne, but since I have had the opportunity to examine his pictures here at leisure, I feel that he is incomparably greater than I had supposed. His work has the baffling mysterious quality of the greatest originators in art. It has that supreme spontaneity as though he had almost made himself the passive, half-conscious instrument of some directing power. So little seems implied at first sight in his apparently accidental collocation of form and color, so much reveals itself gradually to the fascinated gaze. And he was the great genius of the whole movement; he it was who discovered by some mysterious process the way out of the cul-de-sac into which the pursuit of naturalism *à outrance* had led art. As I understand his art, and I admit it is exceedingly subtle and difficult to analyse—what happened was that Cézanne, inheriting from the Impressionists the general notion of accepting the purely visual patchwork of appearance, concentrated his imagination so intensely upon certain oppositions of tone and color that he became able to build up and, as it were, re-create form from within; and at the same time that he re-created form he re-created it clothed with color, light, and atmosphere all at once. It is this astonishing synthetic power that amazes me in his work. His composition at first sight looks accidental, as though he had sat down before any odd corner of nature and portrayed it; and yet the longer one looks the more satisfactory are the correspondences one discovers, the more certainly felt beneath its subtlety, is the architectural plan; the more absolute, in spite of their astounding novelty, do we find the color harmonies. In a picture like "L'Estaque" it is difficult to know whether one admires more the imaginative grasp which has rebuilt so clearly for the answering mind the splendid structure of the bay, or the intellectualised sensual power which has given to the shimmering atmosphere so definite a value. He sees the face of Nature as though it were cut in some incredibly precious crystalline substance, each of its facets different, yet each dependent on the rest. When Cézanne turns to the human form he becomes a being of a supremely classic temperament, not indeed a deeply psychological painter, but one who seizes individual character in its broad, static outlines. His portrait of his wife has, to my mind, the great monumental quality of early art, of Piero della Francesca or Mantegna. It has that self-contained inner life, that resistance and assurance that belong to a real image, not to a mere reflection of some more insistent reality. Of his still life it is hardly necessary to speak, so widespread is the recognition of his supremacy in this. Since Chardin no one has treated the casual things of daily life with such reverent and penetrating imagination, or has found as he has, in the statement of their material qualities, a language that passes altogether beyond their actual associations with common use and wont.

If Cézanne is the great classic of our time, Van Gogh presents as completely the romantic temperament. His imagination responds to the call of the wildest adventures of the spirit. Those who have laughed at this great visionary because he became insane, can know but little of the awful adventures of the imagination. That Rembrandt saw as far into the heart of pity and yet remained sane is true, but that should rather be imputed to Rembrandt as his supreme greatness and good fortune. To laugh at a less fortunate adventurer is to ignore the precarious equilibrium of such genius, to forget how rare and how to see God and yet live. To Van Gogh's tortured and morbid sensibility there came revelations fierce, terrible, and yet at times consoling, of realities behind the veil of things seen. Claiming his kinship with Rembrandt, Van Gogh became a portrayer of souls; souls of broken, rugged, ungainly old women like the "Berceuse," whose greatness yet shines in the tender resignation of her folded hands; souls of girls brutalised by the associations of utter poverty, and yet blazing with an unconscious defiance of fate. And souls of things—the soul of modern industrialism seen in the hard splendor of midday sun upon the devouring monsters of a manufacturing suburb; the soul of the wind in the autumn corn, and, above all, the soul of flowers. Surely no one has painted flowers like Van Gogh. We know how deeply Van Gogh's own predecessors of the seventeenth century revelled in their thick-skinned cleverness and self-assurance, using flowers as a kind of animate furniture. But modern European art has almost always maltreated flowers, dealing with them at best but as aids to sentimentality until Van Gogh saw, with a vision that reminds one of Blake's, the arrogant spirit that inhabits the sunflower, or the proud and delicate soul of the iris. The note of insolent egotism was never more misapplied than to so profound, so deeply-enduring a genius as Van Gogh's; for his distortions and exaggerations of the things seen are only the measure of his deep submission to their essence.

Of Gauguin I find it harder to speak. With him I must make excuses and concessions if one is to be perfectly honest. Of his astonishing talent as a designer, his creation of new possibilities in pattern, and his unrivalled power of complex color harmony, these pictures tell plainly enough, and to that I must add a real sense of nobility and elemental simplicity of gesture, and at times a rare poetic insight. But I do not always feel sure of the inner compulsion towards the particular form he chooses. I cannot shake off an occasional hint of self-consciousness, of the desire to impress and impose; in fact, of a certain rhetorical element. The mere statement of this seems to exaggerate it; perhaps it only means that he is a Parisian, and that certain turns of whimsical wit strike us as having a tinge of perversity. Yet all this must be unsaid before his greatest pictures, before the touching and entirely sincere "Agony in the Garden," before his "L'Esprit veille," with its mysterious sympathy with primitive instincts of supernatural fear and its astounding physical beauty, before landscapes of such fresh and rare beauty as No. 44a, and perhaps, above all, before his splendid flower-piece, No. 31.

I know that to dismiss Gauguin thus is unfair, but one is wanting to deal with so much new material fully. Henri Matisse is, as I have said, but poorly represented. As I understand him, he is an artist not unlike Manet, endowed with a quite exceptional sense of pure beauty—beauty of rhythm, of color harmony, of pure design; but at the same time perhaps a little wanting in temperament, without any very strong and personal reaction to life itself, almost too purely and entirely an artist. The "Femme aux yeux verts" strikes me as a more convincing and assured creation every time I see it. To my mind, it appears singularly perfect in design, and at once original and completely successful in the novelty, frankness, and bravery of its color harmony. In his drawings, of which a considerable number are shown, he proves, I think, beyond doubt his masterly sense of rhythmic design and the rare beauty of a handwriting which, in its directness and immediacy, reminds one more of Oriental than European draughtsmanship. That the artistic feeling in painting is by no means dependent upon light and shade, but may be by line and color, might be [illegible] paintings, but is made evident [illegible] statuettes. Whatever one [illegible] Le Serf," as an interpretation [illegible] it shows a singular mastery of [illegible].

Picasso is strongly [illegible] the vehemence and singularity of his temperament. In his etching of "Salome" he proves his technical mastery beyond cavil, but it shows more, a strange and disquieting imaginative power, which comes at times perilously near to the sentimental, without, I think, ever passing the line. Certainly, in the drawing of the "Two Women" one cannot accuse him of such a failing, though its intimacy of feeling is hardly suspected at first beneath the severity of its form. Of late years Picasso's style has undergone a remarkable change, he has become possessed of the strangest passion for geometrical abstraction, and is carrying out hints that are already seen in Cézanne with an almost desperate logical consistency. Signs of this experimental attitude are apparent in the "Portrait of M. Sagot," but they have not gone far enough to disturb the vivid impression of reality, the humorous and searching interpretation of character.

One or two of the younger artists must just be mentioned here: Othon Friesz appears in the three canvases here shown as inclining towards Impressionism, but he has carried over much that he has learned in his more synthetical designs; his color has an extraordinary gaiety and force, and he shows how much more vivid to the senses and imagination are interpretations of sunlight like these than anything achievable by direct observation.

Vlaminck is a little disconcerting at first sight, by reason of the strangely melancholy harmonies he affects, but he has the power of inventing admirably constructed and lucid designs, a power which is perhaps even more clearly seen in his paintings upon *faïence*. I would call special attention to these, since, if the group of artists here exhibited had done nothing else, their contribution to modern art would be sufficiently striking, in that they have shown the way to the creation of entirely fresh and vital pattern designs, a feat which has seemed, after so many years of vain endeavor, to be almost beyond the compass of the modern spirit.

ROGER FRY.

potters

Present-Day Problems.

HOW A TWO-SHILLING CORN DUTY WOULD WORK.

EVER since Mr. Chamberlain somewhat rashly admitted that "if you want to give a Preference to the Colonies, you must put a tax on food," the threat of dear food has been the great stumbling block in the way of the Tariff Reformer. Do what he will, he cannot overcome the determined opposition of the town workman to a tax on bread. On other things he may secure attention, or even make converts. Absurd as it is, the Tariff Reformer's "remedy" for unemployment could secure the attention and raise the hope of the workless laborer, who, at least, knew that Free Trade had left him without employment or wages. The general anti-foreign inspiration of the movement too appealed, often not in vain, to the pugnacious element in the crowd, ready enough to believe that "the foreigner" is getting the best of us, and determined that, whatever happens, John Bull must come out on top.

But, though a crowd may not be able to reason clearly, and may, thus, be readily liable to deception in matters not obvious in themselves, there is a germ of common sense in average humanity strong enough to preserve it from the mere absurdities into which their very cleverness may lead politicians. From the first, I believe, the vast majority of the people has seen quite clearly that the object of protective taxes is to raise prices, and, as the British working man—and his wife, for that matter—emphatically objects to dearer food, the Tariff Reformer has never been able to make Colonial Preference popular.

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are here exhibited compare unfavourably with the artists of early ages, the fault must be set down, at least in part, to the exigencies of that representative science which has resulted in the loss of the tradition of craftsmanship.

However, in every century a few men actually do come through the ordeal which our rage for representation has imposed; these men do succeed in actually saying something. Hence the worship of genius. Genius alone has the right to exist in the conditions of modern art, since genius alone succeeds in expressing itself through the cumbrous and round-about method of complete representation. The rest remain, not what they should be, definite minor artists, but often in spite of much talent and individuality, entirely ineffectual and worthless. They do not produce beautiful objects, but only more or less successful imitations.

But supposing the artist to be freed from the incubus of this complete representation—suppose him to be allowed to address himself directly to the imagination—we should get a genuine art of minor personalities, we might even attain to what distinguishes some of the greatest periods of artistic production, an anonymous art.

Now it is precisely this inestimable boon that, if I am right, these artists, however unconsciously they may work, are gaining for future imaginations, the right to speak directly to the imagination through images created, not because of their likeness to external nature, but because of their fitness to appeal to the imaginative and contemplative life.

And now I must try to explain what I understand by this idea of art addressing itself directly to the imagination through the senses. There is no immediately obvious reason why the artist should represent actual things at all, why he should not have a music of line and colour. Such a music he undoubtedly has, and it forms the most essential part of his appeal. We may get, in fact, from a mere pattern, if it be really noble in design and vital in execution, intense æsthetic pleasure. And I would instance as a proof of the direction in which the post impressionists are working, the excellences of their pure design as shown in the pottery at the present exhibition. In these there is often scarcely any appeal made through representation, just a hint at a bird or an animal here and there, and yet they will arouse a definite feeling. Particular rhythms of line and particular harmonies of colour have their spiritual correspondences, and tend to arouse now one set of feelings, now another. The artist plays upon us by the rhythm of line, by colour, by abstract form and by the quality of the matter he employs. But we must admit that for most people such play upon their emotions, through pure effects of line, colour, and form, are weak compared with the effect of pure sound. But the artist has a second string to his bow. Like the poet he can call up at will from out of the whole visible world, reminiscences and remembered images of any visible or visually conceivable thing. But in calling up these images, with all the enrichment of emotional effect which they bring, he must be careful that they do not set up a demand independent of the need of his musical phrasing, his rhythm of line, colour, and plane. He must be just as careful of this as the poet is not to allow some word which, perhaps, the sense may demand to destroy the *ictus* of his rhythm. Rhythm is the fundamental and vital quality of painting, as of all the arts—representation is secondary to that, and must never encroach on the more ultimate and fundamental demands of rhythm. The moment that an artist puts down any fact about appearance because it is a fact, and not because he has apprehended its imaginative necessity, he is breaking the laws of artistic expression. And it is these laws, however difficult and undiscoverable they may be, which are the final standard to which a work of art must conform.

Now these post impressionist artists have discovered empirically that to make the allusion to a natural object of any kind vivid to the imagination, it is not only not necessary to give it illusive likeness, but that such illusion of actuality really spoils its imaginative reality.

To take a single instance. In the first room of the Gallery there hangs a picture by Manet, the bar at the Folies Bergères, in which there is a marvellous rendering of still life—marvellous in the completeness and the directness of its illusive power. In that there is a circular dish of fruit. Now the top of a circle seen in perspective appears as an ellipse, and as such Manet has rendered it. In a *nature morte* by Cézanne, hanging close by, there is also a dish of fruit, but Cézanne has rendered the top as a parallelogram with rounded corners. This is quite false to appearances, but a comparison of the two paintings shows one how much more vivid is the sense of reality in the Cézanne. I do not pretend to explain this fact, but it would seem that Cézanne has stumbled upon a discovery which was already the common property of early artists. Both in Europe and the East you will find the wheels of chariots, seen in perspective, drawn exactly in this way. It occurs in Japanese paintings of the thirteenth century. And you will find St. Catherine's wheel drawn in the same way by Siennese painters of the fourteenth.

Or compare the girl in the Folies Bergères with Cézanne's portrait of his wife. In the first the modelling is elaborately

black mountains of Kerry beyond, and over all blue and burning sun.

More likely it is some middle reach that comes up at the mention of "river." The quiet Thames water with overhanging trees to push our canoe and the splash of a long silver weir to freshen the air us; or the clear, shallow waters of Isis or Granta, inches plainly visible as they dart among the stream-weed, with a water vole combing himself on a mossy and a kingfisher darting his flame and topaz through sun-streaked aisles. Here we are at altogether closer with waterside nature. We can run the prow right a grove of meadow-sweet, and lie there in aromatic odor till the scolding whitethroat betrays the where-bouts of its nest. We can gather our posy of skull-cap, key-musk, and valerian, find rare or curious cater-pillars, or watch the humble-bees at their nefarious work on the comfrey till one of them, falling into the water, appears in the cataclysmic gullet of a chub. If we are very still, the water-hen may steal out from her hiding-place under the bank, bringing with her the in-describable puff-balls of black chenile that are her chicks, or the dab-chick may dive with her young upon her back, all among the crinkle-weed, and fetch up some swimming morsel wherewith to feed her passenger. Yes, the river is a quiet streak of silver closely hugged by the trees, and running among the roots of the choicest of wild flowers.

Nevertheless some desire a more tumultuous happiness than Granta or Isis ever knows. They like the river that tumbles in waves of its own impetuosity—perhaps a mountain stream after rain, gashed into white wherever a rock breaks through. There is nothing to be seen now of the inhabitants of the stream, but we can pull forth from them as though by magic, gleaming and jumping trout. They are out from all their safe holes under rocks or tree roots, and scouring every inch of the torrent for the food it provides. In a short time, if the rain has ceased in the mountains, the flood goes down to its normal, the rolling-stones come out one by one, part of the babble becomes like a glazed vacuum, in which the trout are known by their shadows on the gravel and out of which lazily grayling lift their triangular fins. The dipper shows his white front on a mid-stream stone, and the grey wagtail flaunts his tail to shame the white breakers of the rapids. Here we realise the truth of the saying, "No man bathes in the same river twice." Every drop is hurrying to the sea, and by the contrariness of human nature the scene of perpetual passing is our favorite place of all. There is no room for a boat among these stickles, though an adventurous and, at length, calamitous voyage in a canoe has its possibilities. We rest not on the river itself, but on the firm ground through which it dashes. Then we lift our eyes from it, rocks, trees, and bushes appear to go rushing up-stream. All passes except us. Our holiday is to watch the summer rushing by.

To see the river truly at work we must go higher yet. Here we can jump it or pass it easily on its boulders, though beck it is called, it is still our river. It is quite patently occupied in carving its own bed. The falls that tumble into heather-fringed pools are wearing down their rock-ledges, however hard they may be. The stones which lie there immovable in dry weather will revolve in the rain-torrent and grind the channel yards, and in most miles, deeper before the river is satisfied, the mountain subdued, the valley completed. As the central beck deepens, side torrents are awakened. They make fresh beds in the mountain side, slice off the tongues of rock between, throw the water-shed miles back, till perhaps they capture streams beyond and make the beck a full river beyond cavil. We cannot tell what they will do. The rain is their father, the rocks their mother. A soft place in the mountain-side may give us a channel in a few years greater than that which at present carries the main stream. A hard streak may delay erosion till a fiercer torrent carries the head-waters elsewhere. Here are Llyns Ogwen and Idwal, dammed for hundreds of centuries with iron rocks, while just below them the valley of Nant Ffrancon is a pastoral plain a mile wide, with hills cut back to a safe level, little troubled to-day by mountain torrents. It throws its waters down with far greater force, without the least apparent effect on the rocky glen that receives them.

The vagaries of the limestone streams are more startling yet. Mother rock is here so full of surprises that we expect changes almost from day to day. At Malham the staging has been prepared for a stupendous fall. There should be a cascade three hundred feet high thundering into the pool with one uninterrupted leap, behind which we could walk dry, as under Niagara. But mother rock takes Malham Tarn aside, spirits its waters underground, and brings them forth at the foot of the cliff, "clear and cool," as Kingsley wrote, but a trifle disappointing. The same trick was played ages ago at Gordale, but the underground stream has bitten its ceiling away till it runs in the light of day, and plunges through an arch in a series of cascades that are wearing into one.

We have valleys bone dry, without even the sign of an ancient water-course. Yet our river is here also, for the rain sinks through these rocks and only begins to carve when it finds resistance. As we walk by our limestone river, we suddenly miss its babble, and, looking for its waters, find them nearly or entirely gone. Presently they come out again with redoubled noise. Sometimes there are for miles two channels, one altogether out of sight for summer work, the other running only when storms in the mountains have filled them both. What next? Will the lower channel choke; will the roof fall in and give us a grander chasm; will the stream vanish entirely and give us a perennially dry valley? Ask of the curlew that chatters and laughs and screams as it flies up and away and back, wondering why we seek the river among the cloud-berries and the bogs.

The rivers we like best are the young ones. They have the impetuosity, the waywardness, the playfulness of youth. They come down from the mountains with apparent carelessness. "What, no passage that way?" they say; "then round and about, in and out, any way will do." For the present they suffer the harshest of decrees. They smash themselves over falls, ram through strids, go miles round, rather than stand and wait. But that is only for the present. Every year they wear down the falls, widen uncomfortable narrows, cut off corners between them and the sea. The neck of the horseshoe bend becomes narrower and narrower, even under the patient push of the docile Avon, till at last it breaks through, and the great kink is abandoned for a straight cut. Lesser bends slowly lose their salient angles, and inch by inch the entrant curves are filled. Mountain and meadow must alike yield to the need of the water to find its shortest way. Only in the lower reaches the river is extraordinarily patient about the matter. Its work is done. It hands itself, banks and all, to the sea. But in the mountains it is young and new—for as long as the mountains last.

Art.

THE CHINESE EXHIBITION.

EVERYONE, on first reading Marco Polo, must have experienced a shock of wonder at the idea of any civilisation so extreme in its refinement, so perfect at once sensually and intellectually, as he describes, existing in the thirteenth century. The wonders he tells of, the supremely beautiful and well-ordered cities, the life of delicate luxury and well-ordered splendor, were not in reality a new thing in China, but rather the last phase of a great period destined to decline under the bitter rule of Tartar invaders. But every glimpse which we can get of Chinese civilisation in the Sung period, which had just closed before Marco Polo's advent, points to the same conclusion. Nothing could, however, be more convincing than the pottery of that time shown recently at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. The specimens of Sung pottery there collected were a revela-

tion of the utmost possibilities of the potter's craft. The fascination of pottery is made up of many and varied appeals to the imagination, and all these seem at their highest in this Sung ware. There is the purely plastic quality, the evidence of the most perfect control over matter, the impress of will without let or hindrance, and in that alone these Sung bowls, in spite of their extreme simplicity of form, are perfect examples. One needs to take one of them in the hand (impossible, alas! in museums and exhibitions) and feel with two fingers the inside and outside to realise how perfectly the two planes are related, with what subtle co-ordination and variety, how the structure is at once massive and delicate. All the astounding skill of hand of the potter is here devoted to the refinement of the rough, primitive pot, not to its elaboration into something quite different, as happened in later ceramics.

The Sung bowl thus modelled with incredible delicacy and reserve of feeling, with the purest plastic sense, in the rough, hard body, is then decorated with a like perfection and restraint. It is merely dipped in an opaque, colored glaze, which is allowed to run slightly down from the upper rim, and to settle with accidental thickenings towards the base, and then baked. Nothing but that, almost the most elementary decoration the potter can contrive; again, no elaboration, but only a refinement—but what a refinement! What consummate science, controlled by what exacting taste, has dictated this simple process, has contrived such glazes that in the general tone of indefinable greenish-grey there shall float a shimmer of intensest moonlight-blue, or in ineffable pale-blue there shall appear fungoid crystallisations of strange, bitter reds or violets, or, again, in a deep-green celadon an almost imperceptible bloom of blue-grey. Here we have the rough, clayey matter of the potter's workshop crystallising into colors as rare as those of precious stones. A process in which accident and purpose seem to work together for an undreamt-of perfection. I dwell on this because of the strange light it throws on the men for whom these pots were made. What other rich men and lovers of luxury have ever been so ascetic and so intellectual in their sensuality as these patrons of the Sung potters? Only men of a gentle and contemplative habit could have been satisfied with the shy discretion of this art. It is an art in which taste is supreme, and yet taste of a kind that implies an active imagination. These men must have contemplated material beauty with an almost religious fervor. What wonder, then, that the paintings of the same epoch show a feeling for nature such as no other time or people has quite attained.

Even now, when we are becoming familiar with some of the masterpieces of Oriental painting, we have to go to reproductions to understand the great landscape art of this time. None of the great landscapes of Ma Yuan and Ma Lin have found their way over here; but even in reproductions they reveal a sentiment for the moods of nature more profound than Europe has ever shown. Perhaps among the Chinese pictures recently added to the British Museum, and now on view in the White Wing, one may get some idea of this great landscape art: first in one scene, where the spurs of a great mountain tower up, ridge behind ridge, in endless succession, and still more in a picture of a merchant crossing a mountain pass with his camel. The picture itself is a feeble thing, and obviously a copy, but enough survives to give one the hint of a great original worthy of one of the Sung landscape masters. The poses of the merchant and camel, almost ridiculous in the actual painting, must, one guesses, have been subtly expressive of the mood of awe and mystery inspired by the lonely desolation of the mountain pass and the dread of the anticipated snowstorm. It is in their power of isolating the emotional elements of landscape from all that is merely accessory and representative that the Sung painters are so supreme, and here, even in a dull copy, some of that inspired selective power, born of prolonged and passionate contemplation, is revealed.

painting of two geese in the British Museum Exhibition gives us a measure of this power. Whatever the merits of the mass of the new acquisitions, and they are perhaps rather representative than select, here is an indubitable masterpiece. Nothing could be more impressive and grandiose than these two self-satisfied and foolish birds. It is a triumph of religious art, and such as perhaps only Buddhism could have inspired, with its heightening of the significance of all manifestations of the spirit of life, its sublime refusal to accept the depreciations of use and wont. Much of the same spirit still inspires the somewhat later monochrome painting of an eagle hovering in the air over a small bear, who, half reared on his hind legs, turns round to look up at it. Here there is a keen, realistic observation of natural forms, but not of that merely external kind which marks so much of European animal drawing. It shows a direct imaginative sense of the life of the animal not sentimentalised into humanity, but understood by means of what is common to both.

Of what went before this great Sung period, of the art of the T'ang dynasty, we have only faint glimpses. Scarcely anything seems to have come down to us. The new acquisitions, however, contain a single small picture, a portrait of a pony, which is attributed to Han Kan, and which bears out the probability of its ascription by its unique character. There is in the drawing of this horse a solemnity and grandeur, which must, one feels, derive from a remote antiquity. The form is revealed by a line of astonishing force and simplicity; it has an intensity of definition, a containing power which seems to belong to another race. There is still something left of that primal and immediate perception of form that the artists of Egypt and Assyria possessed in the youth of the world, something that seems altogether to have evaporated from art alike in East and West. The drawing is more perfectly self-contained and self-determined, has less of what is accidental or merely representative than even the great works of the Sung time. One can dimly understand from this that, did we know the great art of the T'ang dynasty, it might displace from its supremacy the art of the Sung. One effect of this precious relic is to show clearly, I think, that the picture of a "boy riding on a goat," long supposed to be by Han Kan himself, can be nothing but a later copy, so entirely is it wanting in the monumental solidity and resistance of the more recent acquisition.

Ming art bears to the preceding Sung period a relation curiously parallel to that which fourteenth century art in Europe bears to the great productions of the thirteenth. No new inspiration is added; the old inspiration is still active, but everything inclines to virtuosity and over-refinement. None the less, it is nowise despicable, and at least three pictures of the new collection belonging to the Ming period must count as genuine and inspired masterpieces. Most fascinating of all is the large design of two Phœnixes sitting in Olympian isolation upon the branches of a tree, their fabulous splendor of their tails falling majestically across the design. In all their gestures they are at once birdlike and divine—a supreme effort of fantastic invention.

Really greater, I think, is the powerful composition of a Tartar shooting turtle-doves, while the horse from which he has dismounted stands by. There is here an unusual strength and severity, both in the composition and the painting, a striking survival of the virile force of Sung painting. Much more in the spirit of Ming art, already almost of the eighteenth century, in its rococo elegance, is the great scene of a water-party, which has been admirably restored since its recent acquisition by the trustees. One can scarcely tell whether to think of Watteau or Botticelli before this delicious fantasia. The note of mundane charm could not be finer in Watteau, but there is none the less a lingering religious sentiment, a wonder and a yearning that, without lessening the charm, hints at remoter and

portraits by Titian in the long gallery of the Louvre, and proves itself not wholly unworthy of its place. Another *Portrait of a Young Man* (dated 1536) is in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, where it is not less greatly honoured. The Salting group, incisive, imposing, but in comparison with a true Titian lacking somewhat the Venetian suavity, is perhaps the most important work extant by this Calcar. The obvious fact that the figure of the child has been suggested by that of the *Daughter of Roberto Strozzi*, in the celebrated Titian obtained by Berlin from the Strozzi Palace in Florence, and that the year inscribed on the latter is 1542, dates the Salting group within a year or two. Calcar died at Naples in 1546. The other picture in question is the *Portrait of a Musician* (?),[4] which hangs at the National Gallery with the Milanese and North Italian pictures, in their company looking a little hard, strange and out of its element. This admirable summing up of a man is assuredly of Northern, probably of Netherlandish origin, and if transferred to its proper *milieu* would appear, what it is, a masterpiece of quiet yet intense characterization. Particularly fine, and singularly expressive of the man's idiosyncrasy and pursuits are the pale, blue-veined, delicately modelled yet powerful hands. It is impossible to be very affirmative as regards the authorship of this remarkable work. Nearest to it in style and mode of conception is the *Portrait of a Man of the Tucher Family*, in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, where it is or was ascribed in the alternative to Nicolas Neufchatel (Lucidel), or to Joos van Cleve the Younger (Sotto Cleve or Clef le Fol). The same hesitation is permissible in the case of the Salting portrait. I incline to attribute it to the last-named master, characteristic of whom are the 'speaking' hands, which so dramatically support the general conception. Yet I must own that the technique does not exactly accord with that which may be studied in the portraits at Berlin, Munich, Windsor Castle, and in the Pitti Gallery.

One word must on the present occasion suffice to recall that the Bequest includes two Canalettos of audacious design and authoritative, unfaltering execution—two diverse views of the Piazza San Marco—and a brilliant little series of Guardis of the best time—that when ease and exquisiteness had not degenerated into bravura. Of these last the most fascinating, if not the most masterly, is the so-called *Torre di Mestre*. This has, with a sparkle and veiled gaiety all Guardi's own, a delicious blue-grey tonality, very like that of a Whistler. By the way, the Anglo-American master who admired so little, and was so little affected by the opinion of his fellows, was a passionate admirer both of Canaletto and Guardi, tremendously respecting the former, yet not without hesitation preferring the latter.

[4] No. 2511 at the National Gallery, where it is attributed to Giulio Campi, who, by an oversight, is described as of the Roman instead of the Cremonese school.

ANCIENT PERUVIAN POTTERY

Sir Hercules

BY C. H. READ, LL.D.

THE readers of THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE will probably be somewhat surprised at a subject like the present being thought worthy to come within the scope of an artistic publication. The art of the vanished civilisations of the far western world is not only too remote and exotic for such company as it generally finds in European art journals, but, as a rule, its manifestations are so strange, so widely different in motive, that even the cultured and observant amateur dismisses such objects from his mind, without even going so far as to fix his attention upon them. In almost all cases he is justified. The canons of primitive art in ancient America are so foreign to any that have ever been in force with us, that the study must be taken up from an entirely different standpoint, generally archæological or ethnological rather than artistic. But without trying to exalt the artistic capacities of the ancient Mexican or Peruvian to a height comparable with those of the eastern hemisphere, it may safely be claimed that some of their finer productions will stand comparison on equal terms, and will not suffer by being subjected to the test of European canons. Further, it may be urged that a study of the struggles of any primitive culture towards its own ideal is not without its uses. It is commonly found that such attempts at decoration by early man have an astonishing similarity one to another, no matter how widely separated they may be geographically. Thus, unlikely as it may seem, links may be found, and problems solved, in the history of our own arts, by an excursion into those even of the Aztecs or the Incas. So far, however, as I take an apologetic attitude in this matter, I should like to make it quite clear that it is only in relation to this extraneous form of art in general, and by no means in depreciation of the particular objects that are here to be dealt with. They are of so exceptional a character, so far in advance of the ordinary products of ancient Peruvian civilization, that I have no fears in placing them without apology before the readers of this journal.

The recent history of the collection to which the vases in our illustration belong is of the

Burlington Fine Arts Club

CATALOGUE OF A COLLECTION

OF

EARLY ENGLISH EARTHENWARE

AND OTHER

WORKS OF ART

LONDON

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INTRODUCTION

THE work of the old English potter, as illustrated in this Exhibition, is for the most part a purely native product, a rustic craft, home grown and racy of the soil. It is quaint, homely, and unsophisticated, and, if we except the phenomenon of Dwight's figures, it is without any lofty pretensions, but intended rather to supply the needs and to ornament the houses of simple folk. The mediaeval pottery was made for the kitchen and the cellar, the slipware for the ale-house and the cottage. Delft is a cheap substitute for plate and Chinese porcelain, and though the Staffordshire potters in the last fifty years of our period catered for the tea-table, the decorations of their wares, quaint and original as they are, were but the children of a rustic imagination untrammeled by the rules of art.

On the other hand, some of the Delft and the finer stonewares made in London, and in the large towns of Bristol and Liverpool, are imbued with foreign ideas and betray a more cosmopolitan spirit. Dwight and Elers followed German and Chinese models; and Italian, French, and Chinese influences are apparent in the Delft decoration. But even these foreign types became strangely anglicized in the process of reproduction, and none of them has left a lasting impress on the pottery of this country.

ENGLISH EARTHENWARE

In mediaeval times the potters were scattered up and down the shires, setting up their kilns wherever suitable material was to hand, and supplying local wants with local wares. Remains of kilns have been found at Lincoln, Duffield, Ticknall (Derbyshire), Horkesley (Staffordshire), Limpsfield (Surrey), Nottingham, and Bristol—to name only a few—and though the general type of ware seems to have been very similar everywhere, slight differences due to local conditions are observable. Thus a pinkish tinge is noticeable in the pottery found at Old Sarum, due, no doubt, to a local vein of clay of light red colour, and the general appearance of the two rare aquamanile from Scarborough (Case A, 17 and 30), may be contrasted with that of the analogous specimens from Lewes (Case A, 39 and 41).

But, speaking generally, the characteristics of our mediaeval pottery may be summed up as follows: Body of rough texture, and red, buff, or dark gray tint; sometimes unglazed, but, as a rule, partially coated with transparent lead glaze. This glaze is naturally of a yellowish tone, but it is often coloured green with copper oxide, and occasionally stained a purplish black with manganese. Over a red body the lead glaze produces the warm reddish-brown surface which is characteristic of the mediaeval tiles. A few other colours were obtained with the help of coloured clays; and the ornament consisted of (1) simple patterns incised or traced with liquid clay (slip); (2) applied clay in crinkled strips, studs, leaf-shaped pieces, or animal forms; (3) moulded or stamped masks and figures. With these simple materials and primitive but eminently ceramic methods the mediaeval potters succeeded in producing some noble pitchers. No doubt the specimens in Case A are of exceptional character, but they certainly exhibit much of that elemental force and bold decorative effect which even the humbler craftsmen of the Gothic period were able to command.

The mediaeval pavement tiles should perhaps be regarded as a class apart. They belong rather to the domain of Gothic architecture with

the splendid spirit of which they are deeply imbued. At their best they take a high place in the art of the Middle Ages, beside the carved woodwork and stained glass windows of the Gothic buildings. Their manufacture was fostered in the monasteries and abbeys which were in their day the sanctuary of the arts; and it appears that the great ecclesiastic institutions had their kilns and tilewrights to supply their own wants and those of their neighbours. Probably, too, the potters and their outfit were lent to kindred institutions in other parts of the country, a procedure which would explain the recurrence of the same stamps on widely distant pavements.

The tiles are usually small squares of red clay with a pattern stamped in relief or intaglio with a wooden stamp. The sunk designs are sometimes just washed with white slip to give them emphasis, but more often filled up flush with the white clay, and the surface is in every case coated over with transparent lead glaze which converts the red body into reddish brown and the white slip to a light yellow. There are, of course, variations both in form and colour; border tiles of oblong shape, round, triangular, and polygonal tiles for inlaying mosaic fashion, and the colours of ground and design are sometimes counterchanged, or the glaze is stained black with manganese or green with copper oxide. In rare instances the design is painted in white slip with a brush.

The inlaid tiles reached their highest perfection as early as 1270, when the splendid pavements were laid down at Chertsey and Halesowen, a few fragments of which it has been possible to procure for the Exhibition. A remarkable example of a later period of the art is given by the section of the pavement from Canynge's house at Bristol, a section sufficiently large to give an adequate idea of the arrangement and general effect of a mediaeval tiled floor. The art died out with the dissolution of the monasteries and the inlaid tiles were gradually superseded by the Flemish and Dutch tin-glazed tiles painted in bright colours. Tiles and bricks with raised ornament continued in use as late as the eighteenth

SLIP WARE

A DILUTED clay which is of the consistence of a syrup or cream is called a slip. In this form it can flow through a quill and be trailed over a surface so as to form a design. Clays can be used as slips which are not available for the body of the ware (either because they could not be thrown on the wheel or could not retain their shape in the kiln). The method of using one clay as a slip for decorating an object made from another must have occurred to any potter who had the desire to improve the appearance of plain pottery and had within reach two clays which burned to different colours, and so, as we should expect, the method has been in use in some form in nearly every country.

A slip being defined as above, any ware in which the surface of the body is partly covered, or splashed, with another clay, or marbled with several clays might be called a slip ware. In the ordinary usage of the term, however, it is generally restricted to wares in which the decoration is not merely applied in this manner, or as it were painted on by another clay, but in which the slip is so thick that the design is raised. On the other hand, though not properly slip wares, it is convenient to extend the name to wares on which slip ornaments have been applied in any manner (whether formed in a mould and then applied, or affixed by sigillation), or on which a braid, made separately, has been applied, and even to include wares in which the body has been covered by a wash of clay which has been cut through in a pattern so as to disclose the original body (graffiato).

Although slip decoration is necessarily one of the most widely spread modes of ornamenting pottery, there is a peculiarity, and I might say a charm, about the English slip wares of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which distinguishes them from all others made elsewhere by

similar methods. The present Exhibition affords full evidence of thi charm. It is partly due to the rich lead glaze, but more so to the sof and pleasant colouring, and in the case of the drinking-vessels also to thei shapes. As regards colours the English slip-ware potter usually confine himself to yellow and various shades of brown which under the lea glaze blend harmoniously (green is used occasionally, but in the mos attractive pieces it does not occur). The drinking-vessels, with thei numerous handles, and frequently provided with a sucking-spout in addi tion, form a picturesque and characteristic group. They are quite unlik the corresponding wares of any other country; and, indeed, in an collection of early pottery it is possible to pick out the English slip ware at the first glance.*

English slip wares were made in Staffordshire, Derbyshire (Ticken hall, Cockpit Hill near Derby, Bolsover), at Wrotham in Kent, an probably in or near London; and the majority of the specimens may b assigned to one or other of these localities or places. Other localitie will be referred to later on.

The best known slip wares are the large dishes in which, on a yello ground, various designs are drawn in dark slip, men and women, mermaid, a pelican, a lion, the royal arms, etc., and in some cases onl a geometrical design. These have often a trellis border on which is th name of the potter or the person for whom the dish was made. Th leading potters whose names have come down to us in this manner ar Thomas Toft, Ralph Toft, and Ralph Simpson. The first of these has among collectors, given his name to the ware, and rightly so, for hi

* There is very little true slip ware on the Continent (*i.e.* in which the design ha been trailed upon it). In most of the foreign wares which approach nearest to Englis (*i.e.* those of Sorrus, Près d'Auge, Thourout, Marburg, etc.) the ornament is moulded i small pieces which are affixed separately. This mode of decoration (*i.e.*, by applied orna ments) was freely used at Wrotham, but each applied ornament was affixed as a whole and the effect is quite different. On the Continent greens were nearly always used an there was a much greater variety of colour.

dishes are probably the earliest and they are certainly the best. So far as I know only one of Thomas Toft's dishes is dated, the date being 1671. Ralph Toft (his brother or son) often dated his dishes, the earliest date being 1676. Ralph Simpson certainly worked in the reign of Charles II, for I have seen one of his dishes, representing a crowned king, with the initials C.R. Thomas Toft's designs were copied by William Taylor, George Taylor, and others, their productions being generally much inferior, so that in some cases it would be difficult without the original to understand the meaning of some of the details. The "Charles in the oak" dish (Case C, 3) in the Exhibition is an interesting example of Thomas Toft's work. The Adam and Eve dish (Case B, 3) is curious and peculiar because of the use of green: if it were not signed by Thomas Toft I do not think it would have been attributed to him. Another remarkable dish in the Exhibition is the one in which owls form the design (Case C, 10).

All the dishes in this class show individuality even when they are copies, and each one is in a sense unique; but there exists another and less interesting class of slip dishes in which the design is moulded, the spaces between the outlines being filled in with dark slip. In many of these dishes, which are of later date than those of the Toft group, the design is surrounded by a curious milling. A most interesting piece in the Exhibition is a mould made of hard pottery (Case C, 60), which has been used for the manufacture of dishes of this kind, and which shows the notched edge by which this milling was produced. It bears the date 1751.

All the slip dishes, whether in trailed slip or moulded, were probably intended merely for decoration to hang on the wall. Some of them show signs of wear, but it is probable that they were used for domestic purposes only after they had ceased to be valued. In recent years some have come to light while in use in farmyards.

The drinking vessels form an important group, and probably are quite as numerous as the dishes. They consist mainly of tygs and posset

s obvious that an artist's need to ress them copiously is in proportion to extent to which, by the full expression space, he makes those many directions to the spectator. If he does little than float over the surface of space an occasional shallow dive," his ils of anatomy tend to become ppey," as in a bad bas-relief, and ticelli did not entirely escape this kness. If he suffered in this less than r artists of his time, it was largely his wise acceptance of the fact that natural view of a group to choose for orial purposes is that which takes it side rather than in file. He did not e realize the interdependence of ana- and perspective. An axiom which ied on their parallel development t perhaps, even to-day, be substi- d for the modern idea that both are gerous or useless.

The publishers are to be congratulated the handsome printing and get-up of volume not unwieldy, in spite of its The best of the reproductions are ith better than we are accustomed to in printing in colours, and have the s of having been controlled by an eye hand, rather than trusted to a colour- er. There are others, however, in ich, since they are presumably printed the same process, the overseer does seem to have been one of "the artists congenial austerity" ironically referred by Mr. Binyon as likely to make the st of Renaissance Art, and certainly ded to make the best of modern colour- inting.

RLY ENGLISH EARTHENWARE.

Collectors of pottery must confess that their cult, more than in many others hich fall within the sphere of sympathy the Burlington Fine Arts Club, there is a re element of that mere pursuit of rarity hich finds its purest expression in stamp- llecting. So clearly is this the case that profane person who, ignorant which ong the exhibits is the rare piece mmanding a "record" price, ventures iefly to set down his impression, on mere sthetic grounds, of the collection now view in Savile Row, is in the position Mr. Loudon Dodd trying, for reasons of s own, to present himself to the Carthew utler as a fellow-enthusiast for stamps uch as the astounded butler regarded evenson's hero, we must expect to be garded by the connoisseur if we venture assume that distinguished work always serves attention while stupid work re- ains stupid, though historically it may e the unique specimen to bridge a gap in he knowledge of collectors.

Not that there is any fear of a modern ublic, however destitute of the collector's terest, despising a rude and primitive hool as such. "A rustic imagination un- ammelled by the rules of art" is the ideal of he younger generation of European artists. f they have it not, they affect it, and is not surprising to come upon a iece of work like the barbarously modelled *oof Ornament* (5 in Case A) in a modern hibition of sculpture; its merits, such as hey are, are within our ken. We can enter eartily into the specialist's enthusiasm for

cluded in this case, which display a most delicate instinct for the use of a few simple processes. The Aquamanile in the form of a ram (No. 17), for example, is covered with a skin of flattened, leaf-like pellets of clay—an armour of scales each placed with a sense of subtly varying direction which argues, on the part of the workman, a highly cultivated power of sustaining a sequence of form in the memory: such absorbed interest in an apparently simple task marks the artist. So also we admire unreservedly the severe art of mosaic displayed in the *Square Tile* (18) or the *Fragments of Square-Tile Panels* (69) from Chertsey Abbey, which seem to date from that twilight of the Middle Ages in which the origins of Gothic confess a common inspiration with Classic art.

With Cases B and C we come to the slip ware commonly lumped together by the uninitiated as "Toft" ware. The use of slip offers a kind of halfway house between mosaic and painting, inclining more to the latter, and while the cleverly arranged specimens in Case B make an obviously handsome trophy, with their rich, treacle-like colour, we submit that their intrinsic beauty hardly justifies the value set on them. As a rule the decoration of sprawling smears, while undoubtedly bold and clever in a swaggering fashion, is really a trifle barbarous—not in the sense of being limited in its means, but in being careless and approximate in the use of them. The jumble of methods—appliqués of stamped and modelled ornament, sgraffito, and painting in "slip"—suggests to us that, as soon as the uncultured workman disposes of anything beyond the simplest technique, he would be none the worse for the restraint of a more scholarly training. The attraction is for the most part merely picturesque, and has neither the perfect seriousness of the Gothic work nor the more sophisticated accomplishment of English Delft. In Cases D and E—the former especially—there is some beautiful Delft work, the two versions (18 and 57) of a Palissy design of Venus and Cupids being especially remarkable for the brilliant and entirely dissimilar colour-schemes, recalling Italian majolica, with which the relief is painted. The remaining variant of the same theme (31), with its extraordinarily stupid hatched shading on the already modelled figure, is quite inferior. The bold horizontal arrangement of the decoration on No. 48 is also noteworthy. The refinement of these works is maintained in a rather duller form in the later Delft in Case E.

The remaining exhibits do not lend themselves to division into such broad categories, being less the product of a school or schools of art than the result of personal experiment or the tradition of business houses. Those who, on the strength of the vigorous modelling of the well-known 'Prince Rupert' at the British Museum, look on Dwight of Fulham as a fine and masculine sculptor, will be disappointed with the decadent slackness of his *Jupiter* (8). Real sculptural gifts, however, of a vividly simplified character, and showing considerable mastery of the "Cubist" convention, should make the *Adam and Eve* (39, Case F), the *Man and Woman on a High-backed Bench* (34), the *Bell* in a form of a woman (15), and other analogous figurines in the same case acceptable to admirers of Post-Impressionist sculpture. Excellent figure sculpture, more frankly toy-like because of its polychrome character, is found on the figures of soldiers, &c. (Nos. 29–38, Case H); while there is an extraordinary virtuosity of surface decoration in the *Teapot* (16, Case H) and the wonderfully delicate *Monkey eating a Nut* (13) of agate ware.

OTHER EXHIBITIONS.

The exhibition of most public interest to be noticed this week is the little collection of German Posters, which the Carlton Studio is showing in the laudable hope of interesting advertisers in the possibility of placing similar designs by English artists on the London hoardings. At first sight it might seem a weak programme to hold out—that of imitating a foreign art, instead of making one of our own; but as a matter of fact we know, alas! that commercial circles are more likely to be hospitable to something new if it comes from abroad—that native originality, like Madeira, must be sent on a voyage. If this, the true art of the poster, should be naturalized in England, we should, after all, be but taking back our own, for Messrs. James Pryde and William Nicholson are the parents of all these artists, with, perhaps, the exception of Pirchan, who is based on Toulouse-Lautrec. This is not to say that the convention of the Beggarstaff Brothers offered to us, and despised, some twenty years ago, has not developed in the hands of designers like Ludwig Hohlwein and Ben Hard. They have at their disposal, the former in particular, resources of more varied character, draughtsmanship than was to be expected from the comparatively juvenile performances of the famous "brothers." Yet these had the root of the matter, and only needed the opportunity they did not get. It is impossible to look back on this episode and not to feel that there surely was an opportunity for a Minister of Fine Arts. Some slight subsidy to a movement of public interest, some power of censorship over public eyesores, might have worked together to keep for England the advantage of her artists' originality.

To turn from these posters to the mezzotint engravings at the galleries of Messrs. Colnaghi & Obach is to realize that the modern ideal of a democratic art need not, by comparison with the art dependent on aristocratic patronage, result in any adulteration of artistic standards. Hohlwein's compact, well-considered, and spontaneous designs are far purer art, far nearer to the spirit of the Greek vase-paintings which we think of as the beginning of the Classic strain, than these weary wonders of reproductive mezzotinting, in which the artistic impulse is clogged with centuries of routine. In the head of Doughty's engraving after Reynolds's *Samuel Johnson* (23) there is a fine structural use of tone, and in the black dress worn by Sir Joshua in the *Portrait of Himself* (30) we see Green using mezzotint for the moment with a sense of its calm decorative quality belied by the over-modelled head. One can hardly find a plate, however, which as a whole does not speak of the patient slave engaged on a laborious task of translating into mezzotint pictures which, by their elaborate naturalism and complexity of design make most uninviting themes for the medium employed.

Of the two collections of records of Capt. Scott's Antarctic Expedition at the Fine Art Society's Rooms and the Alpine Gallery, we can hardly praise too highly the superb photographs of Mr. Herbert Ponting, which happily make no pretence to being art. Neither, for that matter, do the drawings of Dr. Edward Wilson, and it is with some regret that we confess a doubt whether the heroic endurance these sketches imply has had a due reward. A drawing like No. 3 shows that Dr. Wilson might have done abstract diagrams in some ways more explanatory of a sequence of natural phenomena than the unselecting statement

described and distinguished from the low-sitting type. And here too, as in the previous cases, the big marble throne with the high back adds to the monumental stability of the composition.

If the Madonna is thus very nearly allied to Mr. Johnson's—which is also true of the facial type—the Child shows considerable divergences. In lieu of the childlike sprightliness, the manifold and restless movement, we find a hieratic stiffness, which, however, appears to be accompanied by real exertion. The Child's little hand tightens convulsively round his mother's thumb, and he draws himself up as if he had to play the part of a haughty prelate as he bestows the ritual blessing with two fingers of the other hand. We can easily fancy him behaving the next minute with the rather boisterous liveliness which I noted in the earlier pictures. The Child's type with the chubby cheeks and the snub nose is to be recognized from the Uffizi *Madonna*, which I described first. In view of the comparatively solemn and severe character of the picture, I am disposed to range it among the master's earliest works.

From about the same period must proceed another *Madonna* of a similar elongated shape. It belongs to Mr. Platt, of Englewood, New Jersey, and appears to originate from Arezzo [PLATE II, K]. Here, too, the Virgin is seated on a high seat, and is holding the Child on her right knee. He is comparatively quiet, bends the right hand in benediction and holds a gold-finch in the left. Rather effective details are the carpet of flowers before the Madonna's feet and the treatment of the gold ground with its large ornamental leaf rosettes. The types and the shape of the hand are, however, quite characteristic of our master, and our attention is above all drawn to the rich drapery of the mantles in folds which flow in cascades, and collect in waves on the floor, where they disappear among the flowers. Stylistically the picture is most closely related to the Helsingfors *Madonna*, and, like the latter, is probably fairly early.

There are several other pictures which bear a close relation to those already described—amongst others, an admirable little *Annunciation* in the University Museum of Göttingen—but they must be omitted here, for it is not my intention to describe all the works of the master, but merely to endeavour to trace the main lines of his development. Unfortunately none of the *Madonnas* referred to are dated. However, for stylistic reasons, the group which they form in common should probably be assigned to a comparatively early epoch in the master's course. Other works by the same painter exhibit more marked symptoms of decadence. As these latter can be dated about 1420, or rather later, the *Madonnas* described above may be placed in the preceding decade.

(To be continued.)

THE ART OF POTTERY IN ENGLAND

BY ROGER FRY

THE use of works of art as historical documents needs, no doubt, a certain care and circumspection. It would probably be a mistake to measure civilization by the excellence of artistic creation. There was a time, for instance, when palæolithic man was supposed to have had a highly developed civilization because he drew animals with a more photographic exactitude than any of our photographic realists; whereas it is more likely that he was enabled to draw so accurately because as yet he had not fully learned the vision-distorting art of speech.

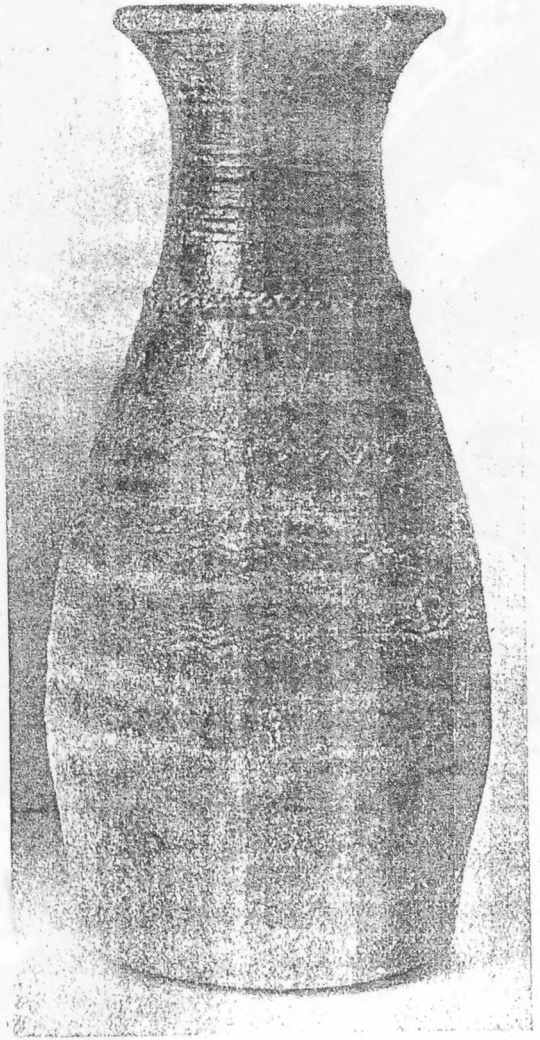
Again, our æsthetic standards vary so much that what one age rejects as barbarous stammerings another finds to be the climax of human expression. There was a time when not only the Benin bronzes but the Elgin marbles were condemned in this way.

Probably the conditions that make for fine creation are infinitely various, and the particular combination of circumstances may arise under very different social conditions. One might even guess that they are more likely to arise in imperfectly organized societies than in highly elaborate ones. For all that, I suppose we should admit that the state of mind of fine creative effort in the craftsman and fine appreciation in the public are signs of a certain good, that they cannot arise freely in a wholly degraded and brutal society.

With these precautions in mind, let us consider what general impression is left on the mind by contemplating the section through English history which the exhibition of pottery at the Burlington Fine Arts Club offers us. First of all, we must premise that pottery is of all the arts the most intimately connected with life, and therefore the one in which some sort of connexion between the artist's mood and the life of his contemporaries may be most readily allowed. A poet or even a painter may live apart from his age, and may create for a hypothetical posterity; but the potter cannot, or certainly does not, go on indefinitely creating pots that no one will use. He must come to some sort of terms with his fellow-man.

Now if these considerations hold, the aspect of the works at Savile Row is by no means consolatory. It is of a nature to make us wonder whether, after all, the historians are right in

(A) ROOF ORNAMENT (?). 13¾ IN. HIGH. THE ART MUSEUM, NOTTINGHAM

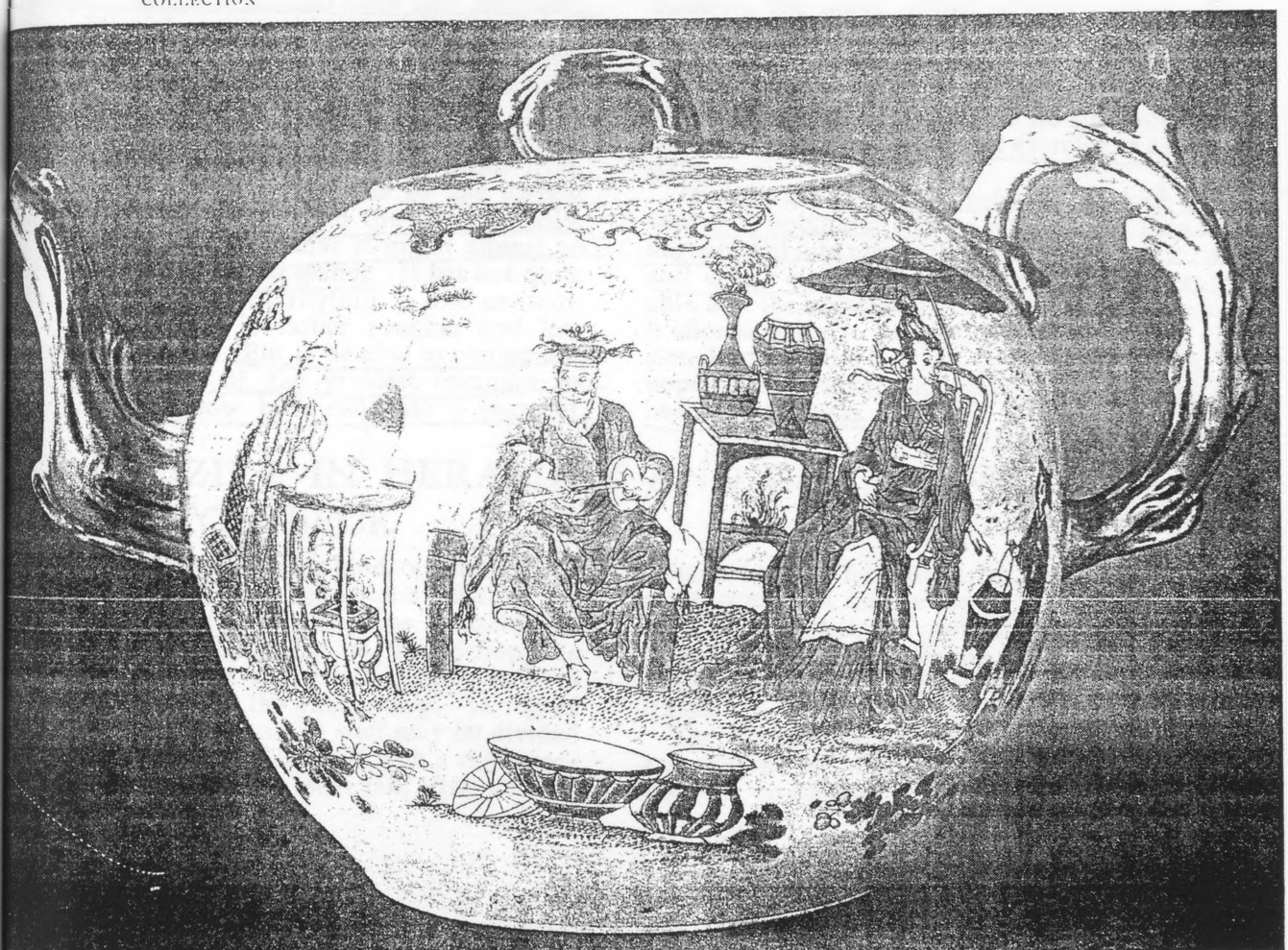


(B) BOTTLE FOUND AT OLD SARUM, 10¾ IN. HIGH. THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES

(C) FIGURE OF A GIRL HOLDING A LARGE FISH, EXCAVATED AT WORCESTER, 1893, 7 IN. HIGH. MR. C. W. DYSON PERRINS'S COLLECTION

FOURTEENTH-CENTURY REDDISH BUFF POTTERY, SLIGHT GREEN GLAZING

(D) REDDISH WARE WASHED WITH WHITE, DECORATED WITH ORANGE, BROWN AND RED SLIPS, YELLOWISH GLAZE. STAFFORDSHIRE. ABOUT 1680. DIAM. 18¼ IN. MR. C. J. LOMAX'S COLLECTION



H KETTLE, SALT GLAZE ENAMELLED IN BRILLIANT POLYCHROME, GREEN HANDLES AND SPOUT. 7¾ IN. HIGH. ABOUT 1750. HON. MRS. T'S COLLECTION

hinting, as they generally do, that it does always turn out for the best in the long run. It may be, of course, that the run has not been long enough, though from 1500 to 1900 is a considerable time.

For what we see is that during the 13th, 14th, and even 15th centuries one kind of pottery was made apparently alike for rich and poor; that even if there was a difference of elaboration there was only one quality; and that all this pottery is marked by a great refinement of taste, that it shows a real appreciation of form and texture, that it is expressive of what we instinctively recognize as a right state of mind.

After the 15th century there is a gap—only one Elizabethan piece standing for the 16th century; and when pottery again becomes evident in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries we find society split into two. There is the pottery for the people—the coarse Staffordshire slip ware—and there is the pottery for the well-to-do. Now whatever the social explanation of this curious fact may be, there can be no doubt that both kinds of pottery are so immeasurably inferior to the one kind of mediæval times that it is almost difficult to believe they were produced by the same people. Certainly, if one judged of men by their works, we should say that the 13th-century potters were men of serious and noble feelings and of a refined sensibility. We should have to say of the creators of the slip ware that they were gross, clownish, and without any faculty of detached contemplation, while those who produced for the aristocracy were content to become skilful imitators of an art that they were incapable of understanding.

Take as an example PLATE I, B, a bottle from the site of Old Sarum. This is so like certain specimens of Chinese ware of the Tang dynasty, both in form and glaze, that it might almost be mistaken for one at a first glance. It has not quite the subtle perfection of rhythm in the contour, and the decoration is rather rougher and less carefully meditated. But to be able to compare it at all with some of the greatest ceramics in existence is to show how exquisite a sense of structural design the English craftsman once possessed.

Or take again PLATE I, A, from Nottingham. Here there is not only a singularly noble and austere rhythm in the proportions of the whole structure, but the interpretation of a face is the work not of a clumsy and farcical imitator of nature, but of a real artist, of one who has found within the technical limitations of his craft an interpretation of natural forms expressive of life and character. What many moderns accustomed to an art of merely realistic description fail to understand is that deformation (without which there is no artistic expression) is of infinite kinds. Thus if we turn to Ralph Toft's dish [PLATE II, D] we have a really crude, barbaric and brutally clownish idea of deformation, devoid of structural sense and vital rhythm, expressive only of a beery jocularity.

Or take PLATE I, C, the little figure from Mr. Dyson Perrin's collection. Certainly this is not great sculpture—the English never had great plastic sensibility—but it is genuine sculpture; it shows a real feeling for the relation of planes and a real sense of life in the movement. It has, in fact, that inherent unity which is so terribly lacking in the high-spirited vulgarities of the later popular designs.

But, bad as the popular art of the 16th and 17th centuries is, it still retains a greater possibility of design than the elegant pastiches which were made for the upper classes, of which we may take PLATE II, E, as a sample. Here the general form is without any particular feeling for proportion, and the imposed decoration is a clever adaptation of a Chinese design which had no significance for the artist except as an elegant exercise in an exotic style.

That the art of pottery in England which began with such noble and serious work should thus have degenerated into cheerful brutality on the one hand and empty elegance on the other is surely deplorable, and the indication of social conditions which it affords seems to suggest that the profound division between the culture of the people and the upper classes which the renaissance effected has been bad for both.

THE CROZIER IN HERALDRY AND ORNAMENT

BY EGERTON BECK

A STAFF of one kind or another has for centuries been the symbol of the authority of numerous ecclesiastical dignitaries; that of the bishop, the prototype of the rest, appears to have originated in Spain in the 5th century. In regard to its shape, the ecclesiastical staff may be divided into three classes: (1) The staff with a crosspiece on the top like the Greek letter tau, after which it is named; (2) The staff with a ball, small cross, or other ornament on the top; (3) The staff ending in a crook, that is, the pastoral staff or crozier. It is with the last that we are most specially concerned; but something must be said of the other forms.

The tau was used by bishops and abbots alike, and appears to have been retained by the latter after the crook had been adopted by the former.

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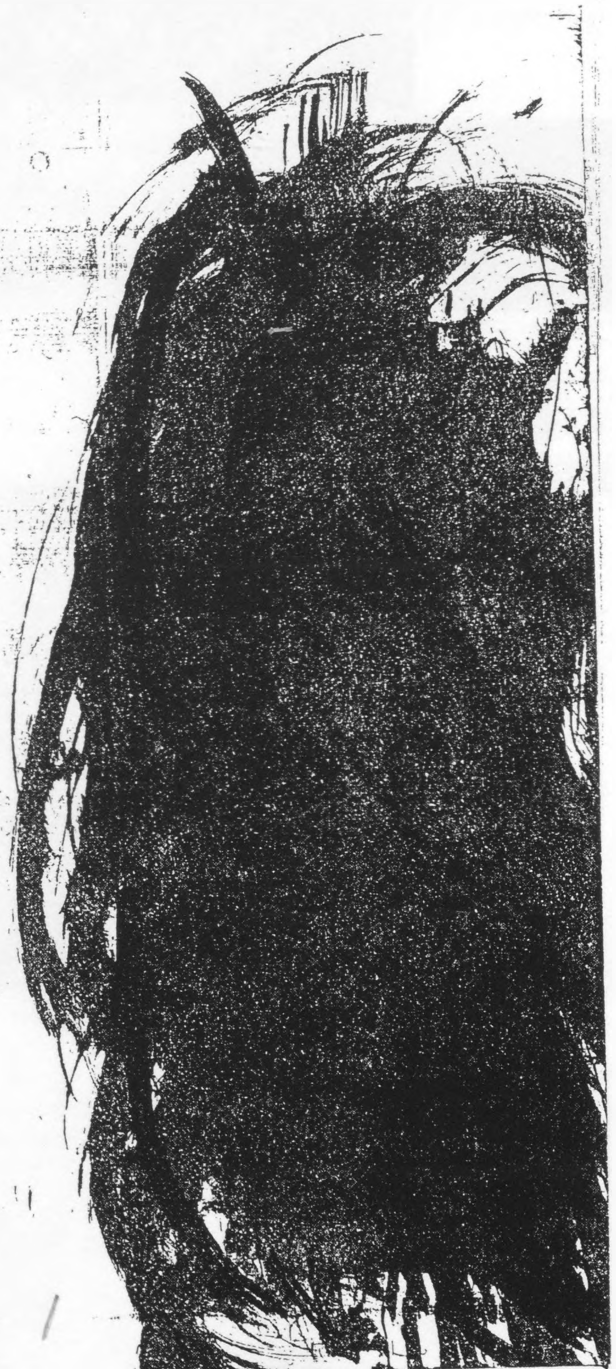
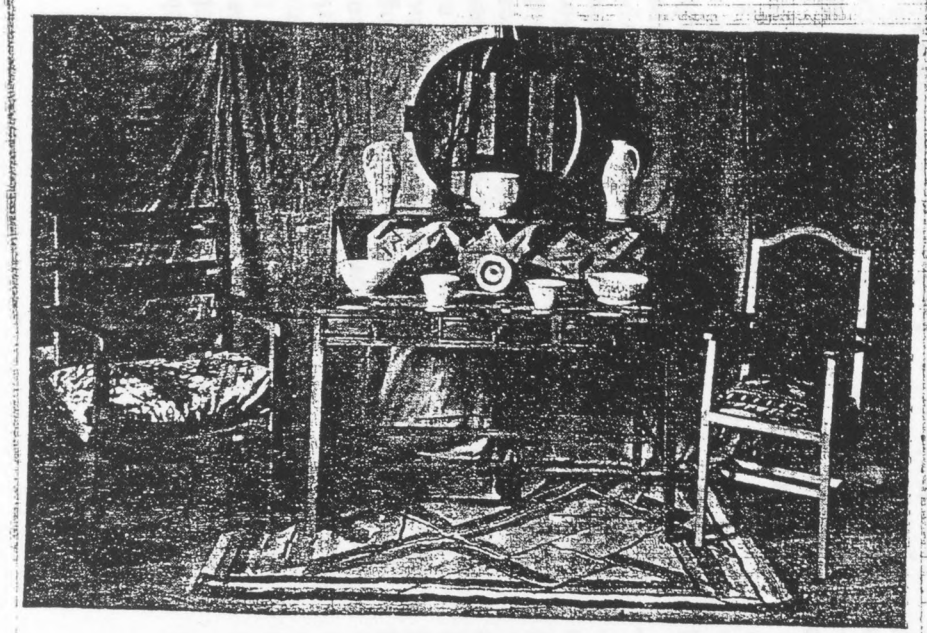


POTTERY.



Of all crafts none has suffered more than pottery from the application of scientific commercialism. We now use almost entirely articles which have lost all direct expressiveness of surface modelling. Our cups and saucers are reduced by machine turning to a dead mechanical exactitude and uniformity. Pottery is essentially a form of sculpture, and its surface should express directly the artist's sensibility both of proportion and surface. The Omega pottery is made on the wheel by artists and is not merely executed to their design. It therefore presents, as scarcely any modern pottery does, this expressive character. It is made for the most part with a white tin glaze analogous to that of the old Delft.

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See illustrations on pages 10 and 15.

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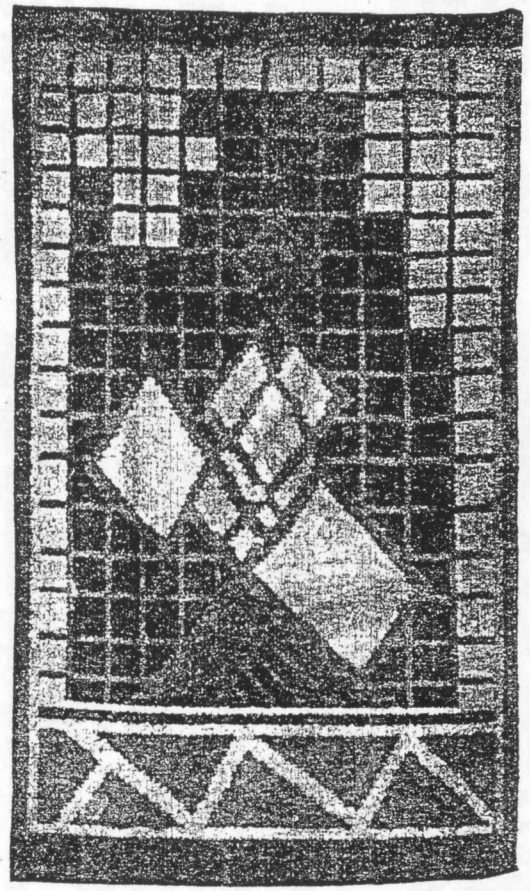

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I do not like to go into a further discussion of it here.

The cassone panels now in the Metropolitan Museum have by some critics been mentioned in connection with certain pictures from the following of Pesellino, grouped as the œuvre of a certain "Compagno di Pesellino."[4] But the definition of this "compagno" has remained rather vague, and pictures have been attributed to him which show considerable differences of style and quality. We must therefore acquiesce in the statement that the cassone panels described above are the works of a follower of Pesellino, active about 1460-70. The same master was probably also responsible for a picture in the Jarves Collection in New Haven representing the *Virgin Adoring the Child*.

The Florentine cinquecento is represented in the Marlay collection by two pictures. Although very different in style and size, these pictures have one thing in common—that neither is of any artistic importance. The one is a small predella piece—the *Presentation in the Temple*—and though quite nice in its way, is hardly more than a visiting card. It was possibly painted by Granacci. The other is a large panel on which the *Adoration of the Magi* is represented with much pomp and elaboration [PLATE II, E]. The composition is rather crowded; the Virgin with the Child on her knees is seated in the midst in a ruined building partly overgrown with creepers. Joseph, in a bright orange coloured mantle, stands to the right, behind him two shepherds are visible, one of them being a portrait of Michelangelo. The kings with their long retinue of soldiers and horses are approaching from the opposite side; they form a most theatrical procession with their rich costumes, high helmets and long spears. The main lines of the composition are two diagonals leading from the two upper corners and crossing each other in the middle of the front plane. This typical cinquecento grouping is modified by the coloristic arrangement, the main figures being artificially illuminated and placed against a dark background. The source of the yellow light is the star resting over the head of the Virgin. The picture is painted with a thick impasto, like a late Reynolds. The treatment of the draperies is particularly characteristic; they are laid tightly over the forms and end in flimsy points. The same manner of treating the draperies may be observed in some of the authentic pictures by Battista Naldini, one of the ablest of the Florentine manierists during the second half of the 16th century. If one compares the present picture, for instance, with Naldini's *Presentation in the Temple* in Sta. Maria Novella in Florence, the correspondence in the general arrangement of the composition, in the types of the figures, and in the treatment of draperies, appear striking enough to support the conclusion that the pictures were painted by the same master. The presence of Michelangelo's portrait in the picture described above is no reason for doubting the authorship of Naldini, since Naldini was one of Michelangelo's most devout admirers. He probably introduced his friend's portrait here at the side of his own, which is to be seen in the other shepherd who is lifting his hat.

No doubt the best section of the Marlay bequest is formed by the Florentine pictures which have been shortly reviewed on the foregoing pages, but there are also some Venetian, Paduan, Ferrarese, Bolognese, and Lombard pictures which might well deserve a closer study. The best of these are not always those to which the biggest names are attached, and the material offers too many problems to be properly discussed in few lines. As no more space is at our disposal at present, we simply add three more photographs: one of Bernardo Parentino's cassone pictures (on canvas!) illustrating the story of Minos and Daedalos [PLATE IV, M]; a *Madonna* which must be explained as a copy after Boltraffio [PLATE IV, L], and a very nice little *Nativity* which may be attributed with certainty to the Bolognese painter Giovanni Maria Chiodarolo [PLATE IV, K].

[4] Cfr. Mary Logan, *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, Oct., 1901.

MODERN PAINTINGS IN A COLLECTION OF ANCIENT ART.*

BY ROGER FRY.

MR. KELEKIAN has brought out a splendidly illustrated catalogue of his collection of modern pictures. Mr. Kelekian's venture in modern art is of comparatively recent date: before that, he was known as the greatest collector and dealer in Oriental textiles and pottery. Indeed he is one of those most responsible for the modern interest both of artists and art historians in the great epoch of the art of the Near East. He then extended his appreciation to Egyptian, Romanesque and early Chinese art, and now he puts forward his modern pictures as yet another aspect of his æsthetic point of view. In spite of the immense variety of styles and periods with which Mr. Kelekian has thus become familiar, there is after all a coherence in his attitude which makes his

* Collection Kelekian. *Tableaux de L'ecole Française Moderne*. Paris, 2, Place Vendome, 1920.

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case one of real interest to those who are anxious about æsthetic problems.

Let me for the sake of brevity summarise very roughly the two opposing groups struggling for supremacy in the modern art world, under the approximate war cries of "beauty" and "expression". The older art, whatever in fact it does, puts forward the ideal of "Beauty". It bases its æsthetic upon the almost exclusive admiration of the works of Græco-Roman art and the High Renaissance. Its æsthetic is controlled implicitly by the idea of Beauty as an absolute entity recognisable in nature and capable of re-presentation in the work of art. The expressionists, on the other hand, declare that Beauty is a more or less accidental by-product of the work of art, the essence of which is the expression of a particular kind of detached emotion.

This struggle between two different æsthetics was brooding all through the nineteenth century, but only came to a head with the new century. It is evident that since these two alternative points of view can be traced through the past ages of mankind the question at issue affects the art-historian almost as much as the creative artist. But for various reasons it has never become so apparent. Where art history is concerned the opposition of the ideals tends to be obscured, and it is mainly in the territory of modern art that the issue is joined. The reason of this no doubt is that the art-historian is necessarily something of an archæologist, and therefore may adopt towards the works of art which he studies an attitude of pure scientific neutrality. He may refuse to put values on the works he investigates—he may merely classify them and relate them with as little *parti-pris* as an entomologist puts into his classification of beetles. Such an art-historian would, no doubt, be an unusual specimen of the type; nearly all of them do, in fact, import some warmth of admiration or dislike into the works which they elucidate, and nearly all of them do vaguely and perhaps half unconsciously take sides one way or the other. None the less it is in part due to the archæological and scientific attitude that the way was prepared for the modernist movement. Already in fact the citadel of 'Beauty' had been subtly undermined by archæologists before the creative artists made their overt attack. The collector's omnivorous acquisitiveness had helped. Even while Greek and High Renaissance art were considered to be the only serious and complete æsthetic expressions, the collector had begun to amass Byzantine enamels and Coptic textiles. There was no need for these to establish their claim as high art; they were curiosities and they were of precious quality and workmanship.

But once having found their way into collections and museums, they had the opportunity to make a purely æsthetic appeal, and the longer attention was concentrated on them the stronger this appeal became. One still finds, however, learned art-historians who, writing on such subjects as Byzantine art or Romanesque sculpture, tacitly assume the standard of 'beauty' and still give their admiration only to those works which to some degree remind them of Græco-Roman art. Such men would be genuinely horrified if presented with a modern work of art based on the same expressionist principles which inspired the early artists whose work they study and appraise.

The case of Mr. Kelekian, therefore, is one of great interest. Here is a man whose whole life has been spent in the study of early art, who at a given moment had the grace to see its implications, to see that principles precisely similar to those employed by early Persian potters and Fatimite craftsmen were being actually put into practice by men of the present generation. He had the sense to put modern French artists beside Romanesque sculpture and Byzantine miniatures and to feel how illuminating to both the confrontation was.

The collection of modern pictures which he has thus made is an admirable vindication of his method. His long familiarity with early Oriental art has trained his taste in the search for what is really significant in the work of art, has given him a courage which has not betrayed him in his choice of modern work. Such a picture, for instance, as the profile by Daumier [PLATE II, B], which frightened most collectors by its strangeness, fell an easy prey to his net. Again, a man who had handled so many Fayum portraits was not likely to miss the qualities in a head by Matisse [PLATE II, C], which was so evidently inspired by the same feeling for the balance between style and realism. It thus happens that one of the charms of this collection is the occurrence of unusual works, which are not at first sight characteristic of their authors, but for that very reason reveal some intimate and unforeseen side of their artistic personality. Such for example is the surprising *Portrait of a man* by Corot [PLATE III, D], which in its tense precision of form, its hard and clear delineation of planes, might rather suggest Ingres than a man who like Corot developed to exaggeration the atmospheric envelopment and blurring of form.

Or take again the Courbet *Snow Scene by a lakeside* [PLATE I], in which a quite strange quality as of a great visionary painter unexpectedly emerges in spite of the doctrine of literal realism which he proposed to himself. This picture recalls indeed the conscious and deliberately poetical handling of some of the

great Chinese landscapists of the school of Ma Yuan. It has too a certain personal interest from the letter with which he dedicated it to the Marquise Colonna. It was in 1874, when he was living in Switzerland, a cruelly persecuted and bitterly disappointed exile, that he wrote:

> "Vous êtes venue me voir, voir ma peinture, voir un exilé, une victime qui regrette ses parents, son pays, vous êtes venue voir un travailleur qui a passé sa vie au service de l'art de France; vous êtes venue sans arrière pensée; je vous en garderai un long souvenir".

Though Courbet's incurably rhetorical egoism sticks out even to the last, the letter reveals none the less what was most genuine and human in his nature.

Cézanne, Degas and Renoir are all well represented in this collection, but we have chosen for reproduction yet another of the earlier masters, Delacroix [PLATE III, E]. It is impossible for most Englishmen to share to the full the enthusiasm which Delacroix's name always has aroused in French artists. We are put off by the theatrical quality of his vision, and for myself I can rarely understand why his colour is so much admired. However, I can come to terms with regard to so profound and dramatic an interpretation of character as the little *Paganini* discovers. It is indeed a marvellously intense and imaginative conception, and though the abandonment of the romantic attitude to life seems strangely distant and unfamiliar to us now, one cannot refuse to it an imaginative sympathy when it makes so eloquent and so passionate an appeal as it does here.

CHINESE PHILOSOPHY OF ART—I

BY ARTHUR WALEY

NOTE ON THE SIX "METHODS"

IT is well known that in the second half of the 5th century the painter Hsieh Ho enunciated six Canons of painting. As these are to a large extent the basis of subsequent art criticism, it is worth while to be sure that we understand them.

In No. 338 of the *Kokka*, Mr. Sei-ichi Taki, who has in the same journal often referred to this subject, succeeds in throwing new light on the problem. This note aims chiefly at summarising his important article, which has not been translated (for the *Kokka* now appears in Japanese only).

The word "method" is the same which is used to translate the Buddhist expression *Dharma*. It would perhaps be more accurate to speak of the "Six Component-Parts" rather than the Six Canons or Methods of painting. They are (in pidgin-English) as follows:

(1) Spirit-harmony—Life's Motion.
(2) Bone-means—use brush.
(3) According to the object depict its shape.
(4) According to species apply colour.
(5) Planning and disposing degrees and places.
(6) By handing on and copying to transmit designs.

Petrucci[1] saw in the above an expression of profound Taoist doctrines. We need not, however, credit Hsieh with more than a modicum of Confucian philosophy. He was himself (as we know from Yao Tsui) a realistic portrait painter. His doctrines were not very different from those of our own 19th century Academicians. Let us take the easiest "Canons" first. (3) and (4) tell us that the painter must accurately reproduce the colours and forms of the object he depicts. (5) refers to "composition" in its broadest sense. (6) is peculiarly Chinese. A work of art must contain an echo of the past. It must be "classical". Copying as a separate art is not what is here referred to, but rather the observance of traditional designs. Thus if an artist depicts the "Tortures of Hell" he should not simply imagine the scenes for himself, but his picture should grow out of the standard masterpieces which illustrate this subject, such as the famous wall-paintings of Wu Tao-tzu.

We are left with "Canons" (1) and (2). What "Spirit" is it that Hsieh means? Certainly not the "Way" of the Taoists; for if so, why should he not call it *tao*?

But Mr. Taki ably shows that it is the Confucian "spirit of heaven and earth," the "subtle spirit" of the Book of Changes, that is here referred to. Hsieh Ho, indeed, actually quotes from the *Confucian Commentary* on the Book of Changes when (later in his book) he is criticising the work of Lu T'an-wei.

This spirit sets in motion the phenomena of the world as the hand of a harp-player sets in motion the strings of the instrument.

Instead of "harmony", another character is often used which means "revolutions, influences". I would therefore translate "The operations of the spirit". The use of the words "rhythm, rhythmic", etc., is very misleading, for nothing like symmetry of design or balancing of "forms" is meant. These "operations" produce "Life's Motion"; and it is this process which the painter must illustrate.

The "spirit", then, was something objective, something outside the artist. But with the spread of Zen Buddhism, which regarded the

[1] *La Philosophie de la Nature dans l'Art d'Extrême Orient*, p. 89.

tion 1 consists of 20 parts sugar, 4 parts nitric acid, 175 parts alcohol, and 1,000 parts water. This bath works all the better the greater its age. For a mirror of 30 cm. diameter, 170 cubic cm. of solution 1 are mixed with a solution 2 consisting of 15 cubic cm., 1 per cent. nitrate of silver solution, 7.5 c.cm., 0.5 per cent. caustic potash solution, and 22 c.cm. ammonia. The nitrate of silver solution is treated with ammonia until the sediment forming has again been dissolved, whereupon the caustic potash solution is added and then the rest of the ammonia, until the solution is perfectly clear. This solution is mixed with solution 1, and the glass to be silvered is placed into the mixture. The latter must first of all be well washed with soap and polished with chalk. A temperature of 22° C. is best for effecting the silvering. In this way a mirror can be produced which will reflect 98 per cent. of the light impinging upon its surface. The simplest recipe for silvering mirror or looking-glasses is as follows:—1 gr. nitrate of silver is dissolved in 100 c.cm. distilled water, carefully adding some ammonia, until the sediment first formed has almost entirely disappeared again. For this purpose the ammonia is diluted with about ten times as much water, which is finally added in drops, and the slight cloudiness, which is still noticeable, must be allowed to remain. Hereupon the silver solution is filtered, and then, prior to use, quickly and thoroughly mixed with a 1 per cent. formalin solution. The formalin that can be purchased commercially is, for this purpose, diluted with 90 to 100 times as much water. The mixed solution is immediately poured into a bowl in which the previously cleaned mirror glass is placed, with the side to be silvered turned downwards, in such wise that the surface to be silvered is removed from the bottom of the bowl by 1 cm. at all points. When the silvering is carried out in such wise that the surface to be silvered faces upwards, then it easily becomes spotty or dirty. The chief points to be observed by this process is that the glass must first of all be cleaned with the greatest care. First of all it is polished with tepid soap and water, or diluted and slightly heated ammonia, by means of a linen rag, until the clouding disappears uniformly. Hereupon the glass is rubbed over with a rag or clean duster dipped in strong nitric acid; it is then repeatedly rinsed, first of all with ordinary tap and then with distilled water. Until the glass is placed in the silvering liquid, it is then kept covered with distilled water. When tepid baths are used the silvering takes place very quickly, but it is preferable not to allow the temperature of the silvering bath to exceed 15° C.

MR. LEACH AND HIS ASSISTANTS.

AN ART POTTERY IN CORNWALL.

(SPECIALLY CONTRIBUTED.)

A NEW pottery which is in course of erection at St. Ives, in Cornwall (the home of many artists), has created no little amount of interest in the west. In an interview with Mr. Bernard Leach our representative was informed that the pottery which he was starting was a small private one, and not an industrial concern. Mr. Leach is an artist who took up the pottery profession in Japan, where he served a long apprenticeship in Eastern handicraft. He has been making various kinds of earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain in Tokio for the last eight years based technically upon Chinese, Corean, Japanese, old models and traditions, and he has the intention of continuing his work in Cornwall on similar lines. The pottery is to be a branch of the St. Ives' Handicraft Guild, the object of which is to promote hand work rather than machine-craft. Mr. Leach expressed the opinion that in such art the machine was a good servant, but a very bad master, and as one coming from the East he was impressed that there seems to be so little pottery in England that comes under the true heading of art. The object of Mr. Leach both in technique and in ideas is to find a common meeting ground between East and West; between the natural love of beauty of one and the scientific bent of the other. Mr. Leach has not and does not intend to make pseudo-Oriental pottery, but to make use of the traditional knowledge which he has gathered and experimented upon, and which his Japanese assistant, Mr. Hamada, has carefully studied from the scientific side at the Kyoto Governmental Experimental Pottery Works.

A SPECIMEN OF MR. LEACH'S PRODUCTS.

The pottery which is being erected is a small one behind the town of St. Ives, and actual work is contemplated early in the new year. English and, as far as possible, local materials will be used, and these will determine the character of the wares. "But," remarked Mr. Leach, "we shall also try to produce old Chinese and Corean effects, such as the Sung and Korai Celadons. We expect to have a few pupils and not to depend upon further outside help or to turn out more than a couple of thousand pieces per annum for the first year or two." The progress of this Cornish innovation will be watched with more than ordinary interest.

13732

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COTSWOLD GALLERY. MR. BERNARD LEACH. AN ARTIST IN JAPAN.

There is something ineffably sad in the passion of a man for a country which is not his own. Mr. Bernard Leach, who was born in Japan, and returned there after some years to study the art of the country, has an exhibition of pottery and etchings which show how much he prefers the foreign land of his birth. The pottery is very good, and his knowledge of the potter's technique quite extraordinary, but it is very sad.

13733

Cutting from the Arts Gazette

Address of Publication

Issue dated 2/12/22

Bernard Leach.

The exhibition of Mr. Leach's pottery and etchings in the Cotswold Gallery (59, Frith Street, Soho), constitutes one of the most original and stimulating one-man shows now on view. Bernard Leach, who was born in the Far East, returned there fourteen years ago, and in 1911 commenced to study and practice the potter's craft. He exhibited annually with success in Tokio till he returned to England in 1920, and settled at St. Ives in Cornwall. Already the decorative beauty and fine technical qualities of his ceramic work has placed him in the front rank of our younger potters. By the masters of the early periods, when Chinese pottery was divinely simple, Mr. Leach has been profoundly affected, and it is the Sung ware in particular (I think) he emulates in the shapes and colours of his dignified pottery. But he is no slavish copyist, as his distinguished and personal stoneware pot of the " Tzu chou " type sufficiently attests.

Similarly, in his etching—and it was as an European-trained etcher that he first went to Japan—we find Oriental influence combined with personal distinction. Mr. Leach delighted me the other day by telling me how keenly the younger artists of Japan appreciate Cézanne. " Cézanne," he said, " is the bridge between East and West "; and Mr. Leach proves it in his fine landscape, " Hakone Mountains," a real blending of East and West. A Japanese has said of Bernard Leach: " He is the only foreigner since Hearn to whom it has been given to understand the inner life of Japan." This understanding is felt both in his pottery and his etchings which thus possess an intrinsic beauty and an additional interest as contributing to that fusion of East and West which so many believe must come before human society can in truth be round or complete.

May 26, 1923.]

ART.

THE POTTERY OF MR. SHOJI HAMADA.

PATERSON'S GALLERY, 5 OLD BOND STREET, W. 1.

AFTER visiting a number of the smaller Bond Street Art Galleries, filled with "easel pictures" of sad mediocrity, I have been pleasantly relieved to discover at least one artist who is devoting himself whole-heartedly to so happy an applied art as pottery.

Mr. Shoji Hamada, a Japanese potter of considerable reputation in Japan, at present working at Mr. Leach's pottery in St. Ives, concentrates chiefly on recapturing old traditional effects in glaze. This pottery will make its appeal to persons of taste, who are content to allow the individuality of the potter to assert itself, rather than to those purchasers who, for their environment, need something quaint to emphasize their difference from the "ordinary run" of people. Artistically this pottery is as unaffected as it is sound. It has that individual quality which comes through being handled reverently, from beginning to end, by a craftsman who not only loves but understands his craft. Each pot is as unique as a good piece of sculpture is, and is directly associated with the artist. All the exhibits give the impression of being intimately correlated with their technical processes, and not merely turned out like hot cakes.

Mr. Hamada covers too wide a field of experiment for me to do anything but touch very lightly upon his work. It must be seen to be thoroughly appreciated. He repeats himself very seldom and when he does it is only because he has been dissatisfied with previous results. At times he reveals his design by scraping away portions of a different coloured coating of clay, leaving exposed the original clay underneath; while at other times he applies a thick, heavy glaze which, standing out from the original clay surface, helps to emphasize the solidity of the wheel-turned shape. The direct tactile contact in the wheel-turned pot seems to give it a greater beauty than one cast in the mould. In all the examples the shapes Mr. Hamada favours belong to the material in which they are expressed, while his designs form, not a decoration adorning the surface, but an integral part of the form to which they have been applied. For this reason Mr. Hamada usually refrains from the use of over-glaze decoration which, except in rare cases, destroys the integrity of the shape.

His designs are never flamboyant. There is always an economy of force in them which is not only a constructional, but also an æsthetic necessity. The accidental kiln effects which occasionally appear do not show any lack of technique—for this is the last accusation that can be made against Mr. Hamada—but are rather an adventure in technique. Sometimes the happy accident is sensed by the good craftsman; sometimes fervently desired. The potter especially risks many unhappy accidents for the sake of the few which will reward him.

Most of these designs and shapes are derivative perhaps, yet surely a craftsman so impeccable in taste as Mr. Hamada can be relied upon to produce, in the future, some work which, while still retaining this sound and traditional technique, will yet contain more individual expression in design. I look forward expectantly to his next exhibition and, considering the comparative cheapness of his ware, wonder how many of the public who invest in ancient works of art will be prepared to encourage tradition in the making.

W. MCCANCE.

ART.

THE ART OF POTTERY.

Until recently it has been quite understandable why unuseful pottery has not been seriously considered as belonging to the sphere of art and has been relegated to the region of knick-knack. But with the revival of the craft as it is practised by men like Mr. Bernard Leach and Mr. Shoji Hamada, we are now forced to give to pottery a place amongst the arts; for there is no doubt that both of these potters can be ranked as artists of exceptionally high merit.

What position, then, does this art occupy in relation to painting and sculpture? It has often been said that it is a form of sculpture; but with this I do not fully agree; rather do I incline to the belief that it has many qualities pertaining to each art and that, accordingly as the particular potter may have the painter's outlook or that of the sculptor, so does it tend towards the one or the other of the above-mentioned arts.

To judge from the greatest examples, one outstanding difference, the most fundamental one perhaps, between painting and sculpture is that of movement in the rhythm of design. The general tendency in the rhythm of a picture is expansive; it seems to work from a source outward; it is, to resort to the use of a more scientific term, centrifugal. Sculpture, on the other hand, is centripetal. No good piece of sculpture is confined to the limits of its surface statement; it gives the feeling of depth, of profundity; as if the rhythm were continued into the interior of the material itself. Sculpture has the beauty of the tiger—tense and crouching before the spring; its power is potential.

Apart from any psychological reasons which make the artist choose which art will the better suit his particular mode of expression, the actual crafts, in their application suggest a possible explanation of this difference—the painter builds up his picture from the empty canvas, while the sculptor chips inwards until he arrives at his completed unity.

A casual glance at the work of either of the potters I have mentioned leaves one with the impression that it is very similar; but closer observation and analysis reveal a vast difference in conception. Mr. Leach seems to be a potter with a bias towards the painter's outlook, while Mr. Hamada, had he been at all attracted to any other art, would have taken up sculpture. There is no essential difference of quality in their work (they are both equally good)—only a difference in outlook. Mr. Leach's work suggests that he coaxes the mass of inert clay through its natural outward direction until the combined graduations of form adjust themselves, at his guiding touch, into a well-balanced equilibrium. Mr. Hamada, on the contrary, does not accept, to the same extent, the outward tendency of the revolving mass, but, ever master over his material, compels it, by pressure, into aesthetic equilibrium. From their work one would imagine that Mr. Leach, in throwing on the wheel, works delicately with his fingers, while Mr. Hamada uses his hand more as a whole. Both get perfect balance in their work, but arrive at it differently. Their pots contain both power and grace, but Mr. Leach's have more of grace, Mr. Hamada's more of power.

I do not say that all examples of their work conform to this analysis, but, to my mind, it suggests the general difference between them.

So far I have only alluded to the forms of their pots. With reference to pattern it may be said that, unlike most potters who merely apply it irrespective of the shape of the vessel, both of these artists make the pattern synthesize with the form to which it has been added. In this superaddition of pattern to form pottery differs from either painting or sculpture. It is interesting to observe how Mr. Hamada has adapted the same basic pattern to a variety of shapes; it becomes a new pattern and an integral part of whatever shape it decorates. In the same way the colour and texture of each glaze is carefully selected in relation to the form to which it is fused. Few painters understand this subtle relationship of colour and texture to form.

There are so many good pots in each exhibition that it becomes difficult to pick out for special commendation any one pot; nor is it possible to give a correct idea of the work in general, for each piece is quite individual. Most of them are so personally technical that to describe them would take up too much space. Both artists are extremely willing to explain the processes of any of their pots. One effect, however, which attracts me is obtained by painting in wax, on the biscuit ware, a pattern the background to which is laid in with a heavy non-running glaze, which, when applied, does not adhere to the wax pattern. The wax, when fired, disappears and leaves the clay body of the pot sunk between the masses of the thickly applied glaze of the background. But practically every effect is equally fascinating and attractive.

Both potters get most of their materials in the neighbourhood of St. Ives, where their pottery is situated, and manufacture their own clay in the constituent proportions necessary for the different kinds of stoneware they require. They always make their own glazes, for they cannot get their best effects from the usual glazes, which have lost all texture quality through having been over-purified and over-concentrated to suit commercial ware. The older Chinese and Japanese potters understood the value of what are at present called impurities in glazes. Such impurities, however, must be understood in order to be used to advantage, and only potters like Mr. Leach and Mr. Hamada, who treat each piece as a work of art, can get full value of effect from the use of them.

Unfortunately, Mr. Hamada's exhibition will have closed when this article appears, but no collector should miss Mr. Leach's exhibition in the Cotswold Gallery, Frith Street, Soho. It is to be hoped that both potters will find some means of having, in London, a permanent display of their work, which can be seen at any time; for, as it is, their exhibitions take place too seldom.

W. McCance.

THE LITERARY SUBJECT.

Honoré Daumier, at Barbizon House, 8 Henrietta Street, Cavendish Square.

William Roberts, at The Chenil Galleries, King's Road, Chelsea.

Subject interest is generally admitted not to be essential to the art of painting, but that view does not suggest that it is valueless. It is, indeed, frequently an embellishment, although sometimes, in Rubens for example, a hindrance. The two painters, Daumier and Mr. Roberts, whose works are at present on exhibition in London, most perfectly exemplify how a genuine literary interest may help and emphasize more purely aesthetic qualities. There is, moreover, a certain similarity in their attitude towards life, although the wide world lies between their methods of expression. Both artists are sharply critical, a little sordid and very grim. Daumier's most typical shafts are aimed at intellectual degradation, symbolized by the law and the lawyers. Roberts's at physical degradation, the pawnshop and the pub.

While, however, Daumier's satire is bitter as coloquintida—is, indeed, a scornful jest to harass, happily, not the distressed, but the distressing—Roberts's is a pitiful sympathy with his subject, and an unexpressed implication of bitterness against the great causes that make pawnshops necessary and pubs ugly. Daumier, I imagine, could never picture a purified law court without a most drastic cleansing; Roberts—again I imagine, finds nothing wrong with the pub or the queer, angular people who go there. It is poverty that is wrong.

The exhibition of Daumier's at Barbizon House is of great importance. I do not know that so many works by this great French master have ever been seen in one show in England. There are here not only examples of his satirical work, but some, also, of those weird, romantic creations, such as the Don Quixote series, and there are most wonderful drawings. His technique, his method of expression, are too well known for it to be necessary to speak of them here.

The work of Mr. Roberts, on the other hand, needs a word from this aspect, because it has so greatly developed within recent years. His planes have broadened and give a greater sense of solidity to the structure of his figures. He has completely, in his latest work, relinquished the slightly niggling method which was largely the influence of Mr. Wyndham Lewis. A general tendency towards naturalism is remarkable at the Chenil Gallery exhibition, although it does not show any weakening of Mr. Roberts's finely individual vision. The human figure still seems to him a mechanical structure, a very solid, practical affair, made by a master

ARTWORK

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POTTERY FROM THE ARTIST'S POINT OF VIEW

By W. Staite Murray.

POTTERY as a means of expression in Art has within the last few years been re-established. The tradition of potting in Britain, broken by commercialising the craft which consolidated under Josiah Wedgwood, is traced through the mediæval pottery, slip ware, the work of Dwight, Thomas Toft, Ralph Wood and others, the last of individual potters, and is intensely vital. The potter of to-day re-creating tradition must necessarily be an experimenter. Surrounded by influences, both Eastern and Western, of extraordinary beauty and technical perfection, with qualities that have taken generations to evolve, their beauty of form, depth of quality and richness of colour are obvious, but the technical reason is not readily revealed.

Of all the arts pottery demands the highest technical knowledge, and however great the urge, the artist cannot express himself through pottery until he has acquired by very hard work a knowledge of his materials and their chemical reactions. It is the time needed for technical research that deter artists from doing pottery, for almost all are instinctively drawn to it; painters and sculptors in particular may see in it another expression of their own craft, for it is a link between painting and sculpture. Although the craft of sculpture and pottery may seem to have no resemblance, a centripetal force is used to fashion both, the inward thrust against the centrifugal throw of the clay, or controlling force of the potter's hand causes rhythmic plastic growth and form, abstract and sculpturesque, and not less subtle in proportion and beauty of line than more evolved sculpture, and as such can be perfectly satisfying, but interest may be added in decoration by brush, incising tool, slip, inlay, or modelling. The treatment is largely determined by the pot, which presents a wide but limited scope demanding high skill in the decorating for there is no question of erasion, and in brush work, direct and vigorous handling is required, emphasising the vitality of the pot.

In Oriental pieces, especially those of the early Chinese, who were masters of the brush, great decoration was achieved. This is the painter's craft, and a potter to decorate successfully must handle a brush with ease. In the East especially Japan, many painters practised also the art of potting, not merely decorating, but working as potters. The foremost of Japanese artist potters was Koetsu, who worked from 1590-1637, and was ennobled and presented with a whole village by the Crown for his services to art. His decoration shows the utmost economy, great skill, and a subtle sense of balance, his best work is not to be seen outside Japan, and in Tokio Museum is a bowl of great beauty by him, which escaped damage in the recent earthquake, and is valued at something over £25,000. The Japanese have great understanding of pottery, and it is unlikely that they would allow a fine piece of Koetsu's work to leave their country. Kenzan was a considerable Japanese painter, and an excellent potter and worked from 1700-1740, also several Japanese artists who took the family name of Raku, doing mostly bowls of rugged beauty. Making principally bowls, these artists, with no question of imitation, but by imposing their personality, gave individual

and subtle new characteristics to traditional forms. The potter may be influenced by traditional forms, and yet his personality is so marked in his work as to re-interpret the form, fully appreciated by the Chinese or Japanese, whose sensibility to pottery forms is generally more acute than our own. To interpret needs a clear vision of the basic idea of the form, and the meaning of its development, corresponding to a degree to the sculptor's interpretation of the human figure. With Japanese pottery in particular, especially ceremonial tea jars and bowls, the full meaning of the form is not revealed until the piece is held in the hand, when the sense of touch to the surface quality of the glaze is immediately quickened, suggesting an affinity between the form and its surface quality. It is surface quality and colour of glaze enveloping the form that complements or emphasises its character. A strong masculine form demanding treatment different to one of softer lines, and the adjustment of glazes to this end requires the highest ceramic technical efficiency, especially as the result of the adjustment cannot be fully known until the trial has been submitted to great heat, and with some glazes to the incandescent white heat of 1,400 deg. centigrade, for the glaze is the potter's pallet, and he must submit his work to the furnace to achieve transmutation. The Chinese took their firings seriously, and practised self discipline for a certain time, and observed a fixed ritual immediately before firing, and Homer in his hymn wrote:

"Pay me my price, potters, and I will sing.
Attend, O Pallas, and with lifted arm
protect their kilns,
Let all their cups and sacred vessels
blacken well
And baked with good success yield them
Both fair renown and profit."

Since success or failure depend on the firing, and the Artist Potter generally fires a mixed kiln, he must know the placing of each piece and its glaze fluxing temperature, so that he may direct the heat to any part of the kiln towards the end of the firing. It is the process of firing that differs Pottery from Sculpture and Painting, the inspiration of these, is visual in its development, whereas the potter must visualise his idea, and its development is revealed to him only at the unpacking of the kiln. The potters interest in his work should not cease at the firing, he has created a definite decorative note, that is sometimes sadly misused. The Japanese who generally understand the common principle of beauty know the decorative value of pottery, and invariably place the right piece in an appropriate setting, and arrangements of flowers or foliage would compliment the pot or bowl, as an appropriate setting compliments sculpture, harmonising with the decorative scheme.

Paintings and sculpture as well as pottery, suffer through being considered as independent units, instead of part of an organised decorative whole. Although as a rule the artist can have little to say in the placing of his work, once it has left his possession, the tendency of modern art exhibitions is to show paintings, sculpture and pottery together, and not separately, the artists more or less co-operating in exhibiting work complimentary to each.

Not only in Europe and America are artists turning their attention to pottery, but in India and Japan several fine artists are working wholly in pottery, and in Paris at least two well-known painters are decorating and working in pottery. Didactically pottery has a definite mission in form sensibility development. The forms are abstractions and as such readily contemplated as pure form. A discriminating public is increasing who have understanding of pottery forms and glaze qualities and who know that in a decorative scheme pottery pulls painting and sculpture together.

The artist who would direct his genius to pottery has a wide choice, not always demanding a high technical knowledge. Terra cotta can be burned in a readily built primitive kiln, and has a range of colour from white, through reds, to black, and a softness of quality, more akin to the original modelled in clay, than to bronze, in which it may be cast.

Or he may glaze his work at a slightly higher temperature, with a bisilicate or majolica glaze. Ralph Wood used a glaze of this type and did excellent little figures, simple, sincere, and sculpturesque; he knew the fragile nature of burned clay and avoided superfluous parts.

At about the same temperature he could use an alkaline glaze, such as the Persians

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used; the Persians did wonderful tiles, either as single tiles, or forming decorative panels, with a permanence and lustre of quality that pigments cannot give.

Della Robbia and the Delft Potters used a tin glaze, giving an opaque white ground, but more difficult to use than the simple bisilicate glaze.

The hard fired vitreous porcelain and stoneware are the most difficult, but have fine qualities that the softer pottery lacks. Porcelain generally is a non-plastic clay burning to translucency, but is difficult to manipulate and is usually cast in moulds as a liquid; forms so made are hard and uninteresting. Stoneware has the vitreous quality of porcelain, and fashioned by the hand from plastic clay, is more vital. There are two types of stoneware, saltglaze and felspathic. The saltglaze is done by throwing common salt into the kiln at the maximum heat, when the salt volatalises, the sodium combining with the alumina silicate of the clay, and the chloride going off as hydrochloric acid gas, the glaze is very perfect, but not very interesting from the artist's point of view. Felspathic stoneware has an imposed refractory leadless glaze, fluxed at high temperature, and technically the most difficult to achieve.

Each of these may be applied to fine work by the artist, but he should focus on the type he intends to use, or conditions permit him to work with, for each requires a special technical knowledge, acquired by patient investigation. Experimental work is absorbing, and necessary, but indulged in, leaves little time for production. A satisfactory body and glaze when found should be used, and in the using, if the beginner is observant, new glazes and bodies will be suggested.

Pottery as a craft has one great drawback. The work of months may be lost in an unsuccessful firing, not always through misjudgment of the potter. Atmospheric conditions, faulty fuel, or the shifting of the kiln contents, may each contribute to the failure.

The artist's point of view of pottery cannot differ from his point of view of painting or sculpture, that is he exercises his faculty of considering form as such, and his sensibility recognises the timbre of a glaze as it would the qualtiy of bronze or paint, and unless he is a Ceramist he is not disturbed in his appreciation, by the question of technical processes which present themselves to the mind of the potter. His creative impulse would cause him to see the great possibilities of the craft for art, and it is through the artist's vision that pottery is again a vital force.

W. STAITE MURRAY.

AFTERNOON TEA. (*Drawing 18 ins. by 12 ins.*) (*Arts League of Service Travelling Portfolio*)
By JOHN BANTING

ENGLISH POTTERY

ITS DEVELOPMENT FROM EARLY TIMES TO THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY

BERNARD RACKHAM

AND

HERBERT READ

BOTH OF THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

WITH AN APPENDIX ON THE WROTHAM POTTERS

BY

DR. J. W. L. GLAISHER, F.R.S.

> The art plastic was moulding in clay, or potters' earth anciently. This is the parent of statuary, sculpture, graving, and picture; cutting in brass and marble, all serve under her.
>
> BEN JONSON, *Discoveries*, CXXI.

MCMXXIV

LONDON: ERNEST BENN, LIMITED

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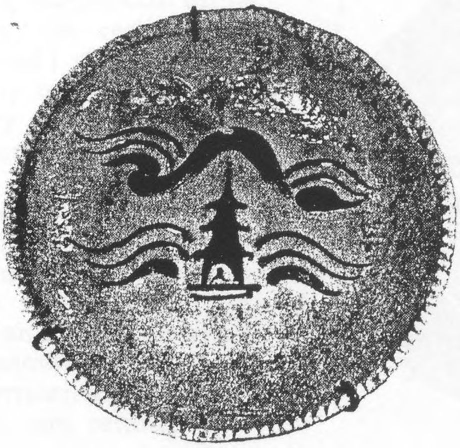
INTRODUCTION

In addition to symmetry or balance, a good vessel possesses *vitality*, a quality due to the instinct of the potter. Symmetry and balance do not necessarily imply vitality, which is a less obvious characteristic, due to the suggestibility of the lines and mass of a vessel. The eye registers and the mind experiences in the contemplation of energetic lines and masses a sense of movement, rhythm, or harmony which may indeed be the prime cause of all æsthetic pleasure.

The principles of decoration are more general, and are indeed the principles common to all decorative art. The vessel, whatever its form, should be treated as a blank panel, and decorated appropriately. It will be found, as a matter of experience, that the methods of decoration are dictated by the form of the vessel. A plate, for example, is a disc designed for use "any side up," and the most appropriate decoration is accordingly one that is symmetrical about the centre of the plate. A vase, to take another example, is best decorated in such a way as to emphasize (and not to contradict) its cubic mass; a "leaf-fringed legend" *about* its shape is likely to detract attention from the essential properties of that shape. Any such "legend" should never interfere with the *repose* of the vessel; the vessel should be completely satisfactory from one *and any* point of view. And it might even be ventured as an axiom of the craft that the less decoration signifies, in a literary or anecdotal sense, the better. Pottery is, at its best, an abstract art, and its decoration should be in harmony with its abstract nature. But lest this ideal should be regarded as impossibly austere, we hasten to admit the legitimacy of certain forms of the craft which, whilst not pure, are justified by their results. We include in this concession not merely "figure" pottery, like the statuettes of Dwight and Astbury, but also those vessels frankly decorated, not for use, but for ornament. Certain classes of pottery, enamelled earthenware in particular, possess beauties of texture, surface, and "light," that make them an admirable "canvas" for the painter's brush. The greatest illustration of this use has been, of course, the maiolica paintings of Renaissance Italy. The glowing colour, the freshness and the charm of these paintings on earthenware make them decorative pieces of high merit, but apart from the materials, which do indeed enter into the question, it must be admitted that the æsthetic appreciation of such art is more allied to painting than to pottery.

And in the decoration of pottery, apart from the quite abstract or "meaningless" decoration which we suggest as the most appropriate, a type that arises from the "stylization" of significant decoration must be admitted.



"THE PAGODA IN THE HILLS." ENGLISH SLIPWARE NOTCHED DISH (RED AND BROWN ON BUFF, WIDTH 13 INS.) BY BERNARD LEACH

THE POTTERY OF MR. BERNARD LEACH.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Bernard Leach is best known in this country for his "Stoneware," his "English Slipware" formed a prominent feature of the exhibition of his work held this year at Paterson's Gallery in Bond Street; and the accompanying illustrations show some characteristic examples of his recent work in this field, inspired by the seventeenth-century slipware dishes of Ralph Toft and the other early English potters.

The story of how Mr. Leach came to be so deeply influenced by this old English slipware is intimately bound up with that of his whole artistic development, so that a short account of the latter is not out of place here. He studied draughtsmanship and painting at the Slade School; and when in 1909 he went to Japan, it was as an etcher and draughtsman, and with no idea that it was pottery which was destined to become his primary medium of expression.

His first contact with pottery was in 1911, when he was among the "invités" to a sort of party which in Japan is an established institution, and seems to be an eminently civilized form of social amusement. It is called a "Raku Yaki Kwai": a number of undecorated pots are brought in and each guest chooses for himself a shape. Pigments and brushes are provided, and everyone decorates his pot according to his personal taste or ability, some with designs or painting, others with calligraphic "occasional verse." Then the pots, which are made of a special clay to withstand sudden changes of temperature, are dipped in glaze, put into a small "muffle" kiln standing in the garden, and are fired with charcoal to a bright red heat. Then in about half an hour the red-hot pots are taken out with tongs, and in a very few minutes the company can see their work after going through the metamorphosis of the fire.

Soon after this episode, he took up pottery seriously, beginning as a pupil of the sixth Kenzan, who was the last of his line, and has since died from shock received during the great earthquake. Starting with the easy, though limited, technique of Raku, he soon went on to the more difficult task of producing high-temperature stoneware, inspired by the old Chinese stoneware of the Sung period, and by the work of the still earlier Han and T'ang Dynasties; and this is still his primary interest in pottery.

There were Occidental influences at work side by side with the Chinese. In Tokyo Museum he found specimens of old Dutch Delft, brought over by the Dutch in the seventeenth century. But the chief Western influence came

"WILLOW AND DUCKS." ENGLISH SLIPWARE NOTCHED DISH (RED AND BROWN ON BUFF, WIDTH 13 INS.) BY BERNARD LEACH

Ralph Toft & early English potters – not pottery

Similar travelogue but expanded to explain cultural context of Yanagi

The Studio, Vol 90 1925, Nov

primary interest in pottery

correlation of early Chinese + English pottery + Cezanne and Chinese painting

when he first saw photographs of English slipware, especially the magnificent dishes of Toft. Immediately he realized that England had produced pottery which was artistically worthy to rank with that of almost any country or period, and set about to "make something like it," using the Raku technique as the natural and only available medium.

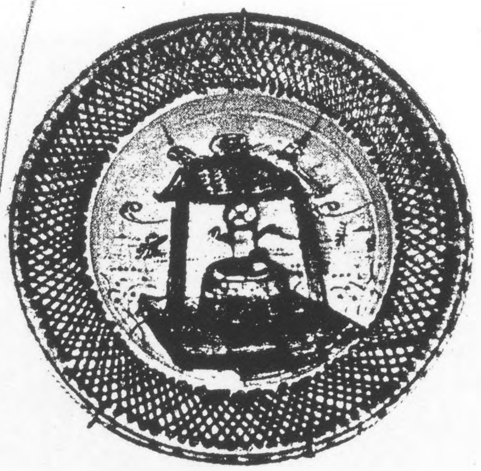
It must be remembered that the artistic and literary environment in which Mr. Leach's earlier work was produced had an important bearing on it. That environment was a lively movement of young Japanese artists and writers, many of whom had studied in Paris and returned profoundly influenced by contemporary European thought and the contemporary European movement in art. Into this coterie representing the "Young Japanese" movement in the arts, Leach was received as one of themselves; and the thrilling discovery of a true family likeness between the early Oriental and early European ceramics synchronized with the still more thrilling discovery of a spiritual affinity of Cézanne with some of the old masters of Chinese painting.

In 1920 Mr. Leach returned to England with Shoji Hamada, a Japanese artist-craftsman, and settled at Saint Ives. Here his first object has been to continue the making of stoneware as far as possible with indigenous materials, using the Cornish Kaolin, felspar and China-stone.

His Galena slipware is not merely derivative; still less is it an imitation of the seventeenth century work. It is better, with no historical preconceptions, to look upon these large and generous circular disks as affording a splendid field to a designer with ambition and imagination, to carry out a broad treatment of strong original designs—just as the old workers used them for carrying out *their* original designs.

At the same time many of the details of the design and technique are directly suggested by the old work; for example, the use of lettering on the border, and the criss-cross work, which was a Toft invention, and is peculiarly effective and well adapted to the technique of the "slip-trailer"—the instrument with which slip-decoration is applied.

not derivative – field for decoration



"THE WELL-HEAD." ENGLISH SLIPWARE DISH (BROWN ON BUFF, WIDTH 17INS.) BY BERNARD LEACH

purely decorative

The price and size of these dishes make them obviously more suited for pure decoration than for use, though the smaller "comb-ware" dishes, the technique of which he has rediscovered since coming to England, are (*experto crede*) admirably adapted for use as bread-plates, salad-bowls, etc.

But the very size of the larger dishes—some of them measure as much as twenty inches in diameter—makes them an unique and striking decoration in any place; and one or two of them in a fairly large room produce, with very little other furnishing, a wealth and warmth of decoration which could hardly be got in any other way. The proper background for them is probably a small country house of Old English character, and they look their best with white walls or in combination with oak; in fact they are as necessary to the interior decoration of such a house, as the Romney Green furniture and the Mairet textiles.

interior decoration along with furniture + textiles – not painting + sculpture

It is surely permissible to consider them as created purely for their decorative value, in places where such is spiritually necessary and desirable, as, for example, the living-room of an English home. In this respect, too, they are the genuine and lineal descendants of the old dishes, which were made primarily for presentation to the lucky friends of the seventeenth-century craftsmen, Ralph Toft and his followers.

MICHAEL CARDEW.

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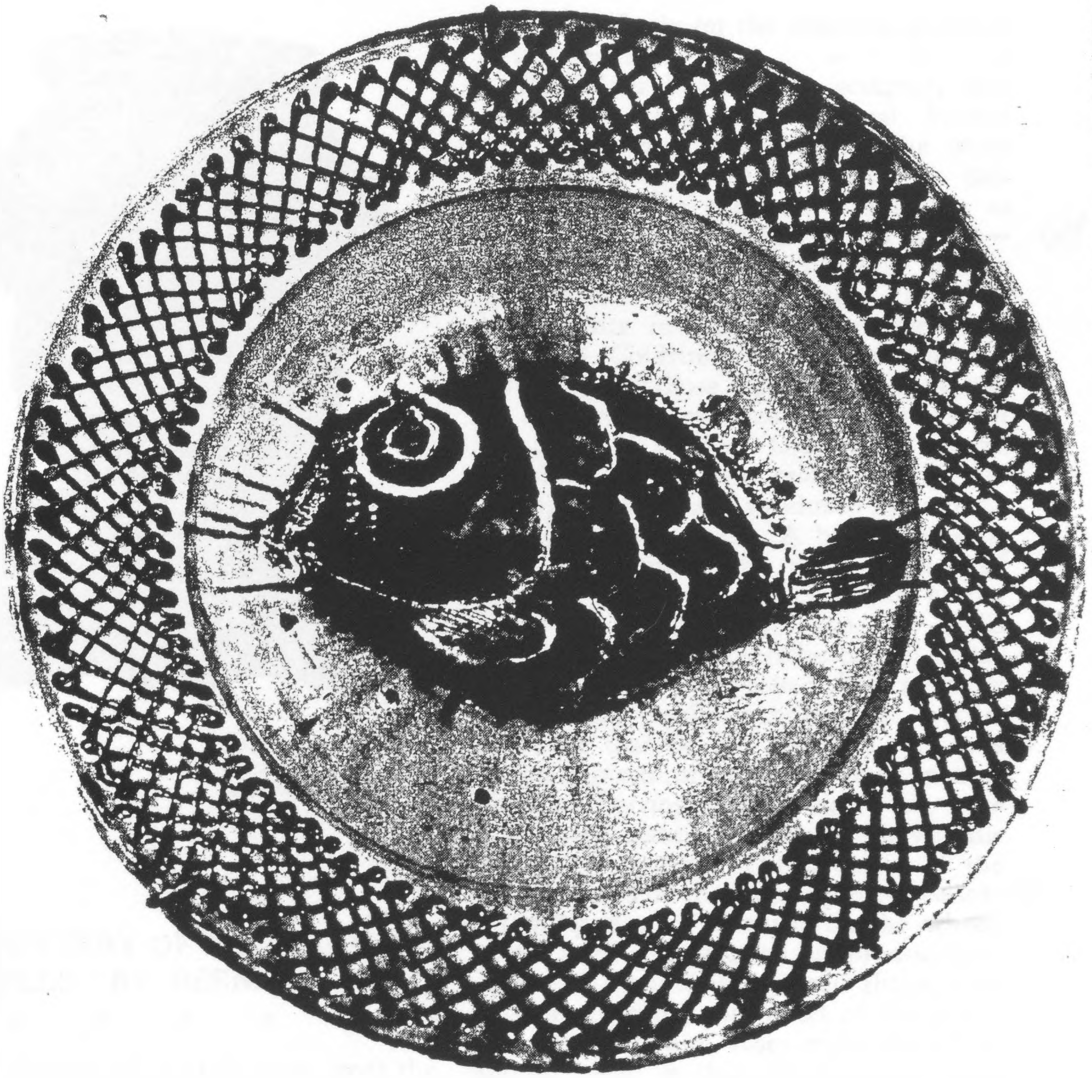
"THE MERMAID OF ZENNOR." ENGLISH SLIP-WARE DISH (RED AND BROWN ON BUFF; WIDTH 18 ins.). BY BERNARD LEACH.



"THE FISH." ENGLISH SLIP-WARE DISH (BROWN ON BUFF, WIDTH 16 ins.). BY BERNARD LEACH.

POT (BURNT RED OVER BROWN). BY REGINALD F. WELLS (Fine Art Society, Ltd.)

THE POTTERY OF MR. REGINALD F. WELLS. BY BERNARD RACKHAM.

THE shifting of interest away from the "fine" arts towards the so-called "applied" arts is one of the significant features of the post-war period in England, and nowhere are its effects more readily seen than in pottery. Several artists have began to find in clay as a material and the kiln as an auxiliary agent a sympathetic means of self-expression. Among these artist potters is Mr. Reginald F. Wells, whose earliest efforts in this direction were indeed made before the war. During the many centuries of its history, pottery has developed along manifold lines, almost bewildering in their diversity, with a tendency sometimes to stray into the fields of other crafts. It is therefore all to the good that such artists as Mr. Wells should put themselves under a certain austerity of restraint, basing their work steadfastly on the essential qualities of their material.

Mr. Wells began as a sculptor, and achieved success with several bronze statuettes which were among the most remarkable works of their time in this kind. Later he turned his attention to pottery, which in certain of its forms—indeed, in its truest forms—may rightly be classed as abstract sculpture. His first experiments in this new venture were made at Coldrum, near Wrotham, the birthplace of those Kentish "slip" wares of the seventeenth century which, from the point of view of faithfulness to the principles of ceramic craftsmanship, are among the best wares produced in England since mediæval times. A better environment for winning the right attitude of mind for work in potter's clay could hardly have been chosen. In 1910 Mr. Wells moved to Chelsea, where he carried on his kilns until the war called him to more immediately useful occupations. It is fortunate that he has seen his way to a return to plastic art, though now in another place, at Storrington in Sussex.

His early training is seen strongly in his work as a potter. The pressure of the shaping hand on the yielding but outward-thrusting clay as it whirls on the wheel, shows itself clearly in all his productions. It is, as it should be, by their shape, sensitively recording the mood of the artist, that his bowls and vases make their first appeal. And in this connection it is of course the mood of the artist which is all important. From a small mind nothing big can be looked for; the large, masculine quality of the wares which come from the workshop at Storrington gives the measure of the mind that controls it. They are clearly of the same kindred as the bronze *Sower* and *Athlete* which are among Mr. Wells's most striking works as a sculptor.

But strength and beauty of form are not the only values that can be realised in pottery. Only second in importance is colour, especially the colour obtainable in the process of glazing. In this sphere the Chinese have been the great masters, and Mr. Wells has studied to some purpose what they achieved. Not merely the general tone of "self colour" glazes has engaged his attention, but also the subtle

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"FIRST STEPS" (BRONZE)
BY REGINALD F. WELLS
(Fine Art Society, Ltd.)

gradations of tone obtainable by careful control of composition and firing, and of the relation of such colouring to the light and shade of the form. The effects arising from the downward flow of the liquescent glaze during the firing have also been brought into play, giving when rightly controlled a dappled or slightly undulating surface agreeable alike to sight and touch. And with it all we are not allowed to forget the body, as it were of bone and flesh, upon which this outer dress is laid. Too often the splendour of colour that can be called forth with the help of the furnace has blinded the potter to the need of keeping and cherishing that clay quality which is the foremost birthright of a pot. The English potters of the past, before they became engulfed in the flood of industrialism, were less prone than some others to yield to this temptation, and it is cheering to find successors in the present who are once more alive to the essentials of their craft.

We can only be glad of the progress that has been made in this country since the war in appreciation of such wares as those of Mr. Wells. They are valuable not only for their own sake, but also for the wholesome stimulus they give towards the improvement of pottery made for useful purposes on purely commercial lines. Indeed it may fairly be claimed that the upward movement that can certainly be discerned in the designing of ordinary table wares in the last few years is due in no small measure to the efforts of pioneering artist potters who have had the courage to take the risks of striking out on paths of their own choosing.

BERNARD RACKHAM.

ENGLISH POTTERY: AN ÆSTHETIC SURVEY

By HERBERT READ

THE object of this article is not so much to discuss the æsthetics of English pottery—that I have already done in conjunction with Mr. Bernard Rackham in the introductory chapter to our book on "English Pottery"—but rather to provide a practical scheme or *cadre* to which the various types of English wares may be related. A good deal of the confusion that reigns in this minor art is due to the lack of any such logical conception of values; and even that instinctive appreciation which allows the casual person to say, "I know a good picture when I see one," fails him when he is confronted with a pot. It is possible that a child or a savage might have some intuitive apprehension of æsthetic values in pottery; but the ordinary civilized "lover of beautiful things" too often comes to the subject with his mind, consciously or unconsciously, surcharged with the standards of judgment proper to some other art, such as painting, but inadequate for the works of the potter. In the book referred to above we touched upon this aspect of the question, and of criticisms based on such misconceptions we wrote: "They take too little account of the nature of pottery and of the technique natural to the material of which it is made. Like most other arts, that of the potter had a humble birth in meeting purely utilitarian needs, but from the first it was potentially, no less than painting or sculpture, a means of æsthetic self-expression through the work of the hands. Sculpture, whether glyptic or plastic, had from the first an imitative intention, and is to that extent less free for the expression of the æsthetic sense than pottery, which may be regarded as plastic art in its most abstract form." This I still think is the essence of the subject—the fundamental proposition on the basis of which all æsthetic classifications of pottery must be made.

As a corollary to this doctrine of the primacy of formal values, we must have a doctrine of the subordination of all decorative elements. In short, any decoration can only be justified in so far as it serves to accentuate or enhance the form of the pot. As a matter of fact, we shall find that in general, especially in England, the decorative elements have been allowed almost complete sway in the historical development of the craft; but this has always been to the detriment of real æsthetic values.

If now we try to summon up in one rapid survey the evolution of English pottery from its early beginnings in the thirteenth century (for it is at about this time that we first become conscious of a distinctively English type) right down to modern times, we shall find the whole series falling fairly easily into four distinct groups. These groups are by no means in chronological sequence, though each will be found to correspond with certain economic and historical factors which have no doubt largely determined it.

The four groups may be summarized in this manner:—

I. Formal values: the Gothic period and the modern revival.

II. Peasant art.

III. Imitative art: almost confined to the eighteenth century.

IV. Utilitarian and commercial values: the nineteenth century.

The first group, which in early Chinese pottery is quite the distinctive group, is but poorly represented in English pottery. But there is evidence enough to show that at one time, during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, formal values were by no means neglected in English pottery, and it is a pity that the wares of this period have never been studied nor collected from this point of view. They mostly exist in archæological museums, incongruously assorted with flint instruments and stuffed birds; ill-lit, ill-arranged, and rarely recognized by the discerning eye. If the same amount of interest and care were to be lavished on the pottery of England's greatest artistic age as is lavished on the early wares of China, there would be no need for national modesty: in purity, vigour, and vitality of formal qualities, English medieval ceramics can bear comparison with the best products of the T'ang and Sung dynasties. We illustrate a typical thirteenth-century pitcher from the Victoria and Albert

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THE VICAR AND MOSES
A Group by Ralph Wood. English, late eighteenth century

Museum; beautiful as this example is, I venture to say that in the London museums alone, especially at the Guildhall and at Lancaster House, there are a hundred examples equally perfect in form.

For the general mass of English pottery, as generally conceived, one cannot claim much formal beauty. Here and there one finds a piece of Nottingham stoneware or even an unpretentious Wedgwood jug, in which, perhaps unconsciously, some beauty of mass and outline has been achieved. Only in modern times, particularly in the hands of Mr. W. S. Murray and Mr. Bernard Leach, has there been a revival of that sense of formal values which we must persist in regarding as the essential quality of the potter's art.

Peasant pottery, which forms our second group, has never developed in England to quite the same degree of distinctiveness and charm that we find, say, in Central Europe. But the English peasant wares are by no means despicable, and from the way in which they have closely confined themselves to the material possibilities of the clay technique, they have avoided the extravagances of some of their continental counterparts. They fall naturally into three or four subdivisions, of which the most important, from an æsthetic point of view, are the wares which develop local conventions of design, and exploit to the utmost the simple materials and processes within the command of a peasant. Such are the well-known Toft wares of the seventeenth century, so called from the family of potters who made them, and whose name so often forms a part of the decoration. They generally take the form of large platters, evidently made with a decorative purpose in mind, and were probably the occasional productions of potters whose general run of work was confined to wares of a much simpler and more utilitarian nature. The only means used in the decoration are variations of the one substance—clay. The designs are either of the fanciful kind illustrated here (page 319, fig. A), or they may take the form of symmetrical designs of foliage and strapwork. The free pattern shown in fig. B is of the same origin, but of a less pretentious nature, and this was probably the kind of decoration given to the more utilitarian wares. Another form of a simple but effective nature was obtained by mixing different coloured clays together so as to form irregular striations, and it is interesting to note that precisely the same technique was used by the Chinese potters of the T'ang dynasty.

Reports on the
Present Position and Tendencies of the

INDUSTRIAL ARTS

as indicated at the International Exhibition
of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts,
Paris, 1925

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flambé effects are high temperature glazes, each piece being unique and depending on the vagaries of the fire. Many of his bowls are as thin as egg-shell. They are hand-thrown and turned and leadless glazed. These leadless glazes develop the most brilliant and beautiful pottery colour. In addition to his flambé and glaze effects, Mr. Taylor produces a very large range of lustre effects, charming and subtle in colour, and well suited to his light, delicate pottery.

Messrs. Wood & Sons, Burslem, who specialise in dinner ware, hotel ware, and general domestic pottery, showed excellent examples of their work. Their decorations are mostly carried out in underglaze. Simplicity of design characterises many of their dinner patterns.

The Upchurch Pottery, Rainham, Kent, showed a collection of hand-thrown salt glaze decorative vases, and *Messrs. Brannam, Ltd., of Barnstaple*, showed their characteristic Devonshire red clay wares.

Messrs. Joseph Bourne & Son, Ltd., exhibited a very interesting case of "Domestic and Art Stoneware." They showed a fairly large range of well-glazed and business-like utilitarian articles for cooking purposes, such as casseroles, saucepans, and marmites. These achieve merit by their unpretentiousness.

Messrs. A. E. Gray & Co., Ltd., Hanley.—Messrs. A. E. Gray & Co., decorate interesting, well-made utilitarian and ornamental ware in "Gloria Lustre," each piece being hand-painted and signed by the artist. They also decorate china tea ware, but their chief and most meritorious exhibit was of well-decorated pieces of dinner ware. This ware is excellent in its simplicity, great use being made of small bright touches of on-glaze enamel colour, which gives a clean and wholesome effect—so necessary to utilitarian ware.

Messrs. George Jones & Sons, Ltd., Stoke-on-Trent.—Messrs. George Jones, of the Crescent Works, Stoke-on-Trent, gave a very effective display of Table-ware, and several groups of articles in china, which they designate as porcelain. They are developing underglaze hand-painted decorations, the most effective being a swiftly painted pattern in a good underglaze blue.

The Ashtead Potters, Ashtead, Surrey.—The Ashtead Pottery is the work of disabled ex-servicemen. Much gratuitous work has been given by British manufacturers and others to help this scheme forward. Started with only 14 men (they now employ some 30 or more), this small factory is producing interesting pottery of a simple decorative kind, and is making great progress.

BRITISH STUDIO POTTERS.

The work of the Studio Potters was chiefly housed in the British Government Pavilion, although several pieces were shown in the educational department in the Grand Palais.

Studio Pottery is in its infancy in England. Although great hopes are entertained for its future development, at the present moment it cannot be said that it has yet contributed much to the history of English Pottery. It is yet lacking

in virility and it is inclined to be affected or to err on the " pretty-pretty " side. Notable exceptions to this criticism are afforded by the work of Miss Gwendoline Parnell, and that of Mr. W. Staite Murray.

Miss Parnell's work is dainty, and is saved from the pretty-pretty order by her innate sense of humour. She is a most versatile designer, and is one of the most distinguished studio potters we have yet produced. Her work is characterised by its lightness and frivolity, particularly suited to the delicacy of the china body she uses. Her figures and groups are carefully, even laboriously built up, but never does her method of making interfere with the grace and movement of her figures. Her ideas have much of the charm of the Old Chelsea figures, but wholly devoid of their insipidity. Her " dainty rogues in porcelain " are eagerly sought after as works of art, and are greatly treasured by those fortunate enough to possess them.

Of a totally different order is the work of W. Staite Murray. Mr. Murray is, judging from his work, a worshipper at the shrine of the old Chinese Potters. His work is characterised by fine virility. His pots are simple plastic shapes, at times reaching a great nobility of form. The body is stoneware, covered with a thick rich glaze, and his decorations are usually abstract, conventional, and always an integral part of the pot. He is a great artist potter. The high artistic qualities of his work have yet to be generally known, and recognised as a great asset to English Pottery.

The work of Alfred and Louise Powell is not, in the strictest sense of the term, " studio " pottery, as their productions are made by Messrs. Josiah Wedgwood & Sons, of Stoke-on-Trent. However, this appears to be a very happy and sensible solution of the problem of producing fine pottery. Wedgwood's make excellent pottery and Mr. and Mrs. Powell are excellent artists. They no doubt design the shapes they decorate, and their work always shows a keen appreciation of suitable treatment of various articles of every-day use. Their best work is found in lordly bowls and plaques. Several interesting examples were shown. They are based on the brave and honest pattern work of William Morris, and have a delightfully English style. Messrs. Wedgwood also exhibited some of their lustre designs in the Grand Palais. Both Mr. and Mrs. Powell have been interested in pottery for many years, and English Pottery would be very much poorer without their splendid contributions to the artistic side of the craft.

Other studio potters who showed good work were: Mr. Bernard Leach of St. Ives, Mr. Harry Parr of Chelsea, Mr. W. B. Dalton, Misses Sleigh and Simpson, Miss Stella Crofts, Miss Dora Lunn, Mrs. Phœbe Stabler, Miss Aline Ellis, and Mr. Reginald Wells.

In the education department the Royal College of Art and the Woolwich Polytechnic exhibited several examples of pottery. Most of these pieces were interesting as showing the possibilities of turning artistic talent into a very fascinating craft. Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts also showed some pieces of pottery.

ST. IVES

In holding two simultaneous Exhibitions of work, it is my wish to draw attention to the fact that besides the inevitably expensive Stoneware selected from my year's personal output, I am attempting with my pupils, to provide some sound hand-made Pottery in the English Slipware tradition, which is sufficiently inexpensive for people of moderate means to take into daily use.

There is a need to escape from the atmosphere of the over-precious; and not only have the new craftsmen to prove that they can be creative, but as 'artist-craftsmen' they must, if only for the sake of their art, contribute to national life. A growing public wants to enjoy the use of its crockery, and that can only be if it is inseparably practical and beautiful. Behind the scenes, the worker in the factory restlessly wants to enjoy his work again.

There is a profound and urgent need for attempting to bridge that gulf soon.

BERNARD LEACH

Spring 1927

Handworkers' Pamphlets No. 3

9d.

A Potter's Outlook

BERNARD LEACH

NEW HANDWORKER'S GALLERY

14, PERCY STREET

W.1.

A POTTER'S OUTLOOK

WHEN it was first suggested to me in 1921 to write a personal statement with regard to my own work, I resented the idea, feeling that a potter's business was to get on with his job, and leave writing to those who make a profession of it. I was then fresh to the conditions of English Craftsmanship.

Having become a potter in Japan - a land still new to the affair of industrialism - I did not realise the chasm which a century of factories had torn between ordinary life and hand crafts such as mine. I thought that, as in Japan, the work would speak for itself. But I have been forced to the conclusion that, except to the very few, this is not the case, and that unless the potter, weaver, wheelwright, or other craftsman, tells his own tale, no one else will or can do it for him. At this peculiar junction of two centuries nobody apparently is able to perceive the elementary conditions of our work, unless he has himself seriously tried to make some organically useful and beautiful article.

On my return to England after many years absence, the first thing that surprised me was the lack of any acknowledged classic standard of pottery. Out in the East this is the thread of life which runs through tradition. It once made a Japanese farmer say to me apologetically pointing to an ugly glass vase "Please excuse that, I know it is not according to a Tea-Master's taste, but it pleases me". It is only during the last few years that our archaeologists have discovered that we had a mediaeval pottery tradition with a form-sense equivalent to the contemporary architecture. An indigenous 17th and 18th century slip-ware is quite screened from our view by a hundred years of industry, although even here in the distant fields of Cornwall I

have picked up many shards of the combed oven-dishes which were in use until 30 or 40 years ago: the name Wedgwood is still invoked as if he were a great artist instead of only the first and greatest of commercial potters. Even painters and sculptors are wildly ignorant of the elements of potting, and when confronted by pots are inclined to look only for such qualities as are aimed at in their own work, missing the beauty which is pressed, and thrown, and cut, and burned, and subtly devised to meet a daily need.

This confusion is depressing, for by it the thought is again and again forced upon us that nothing we could do, not even the production of veritable masterpieces, would receive the recognition which we all naturally crave, and without which, we can still less carry on than those in freer fields of art.

From this arises the question: Who are we? What kind of person is the craftsman of our time? He is called individual, or artist - but how vague is the general understanding of the distinction even amongst educated people - and what is his relationship to the peasant, or to the industrial worker?

A moment's thought must make it clear that he is different from these, if only because he comes later in evolution. Factories have driven folk-art practically out of England, and it only survives in out of the way corners of Europe; and the artist-craftsman, since the day of William Morris, has been the chief means of reaction against the materialism of Industry. But, as a reaction, he has been almost as extreme as the thing against which he has reacted. Antagonism has resulted. The strife has been over the body of the public.

After 100 years, the trade offers us crockery which is cheap, standardised, thin, white, hard, and waterproof - good qualities

all - but the shapes are wretched, the colours sharp and harsh, the decoration banal, and quality absent. There can be no two minds about it, if judgement is made from the level of the World's classics of pottery.

Let me mention a few such periods and sources:- Chinese T'ang, and Sung, and some Ming. Corean Celadons, Japanese Tea-Masters' wares, early Persian, Peruvian, Hispano-Moresque, German Bellarmines, some Delft, and English Toft Dishes. Such pottery was a completely human expression, it had not been mechanised. But who has ever seen a factory-made pot with a nature of its own - a soul? How should it have one, except it were breathed into it by the love of its maker?

Very well! What have the artist-potters been doing all this while? Working by hand to please ourselves as artists first, and therefore producing only limited and expensive pieces, we have been supported by collectors, purists, cranks, or "arty" people, rather than by the normal man or worman. In so far we have tended ourselves to become abnormal, and consequently most of our pots have been still-born: they have not had the breath of reality in them: it has been a game.

I feel that we must be prepared to relinquish half our "artist", "art for art's sake", "misunderstood", "solitary", "hand-made", "hand-spun", "hand-thrown", "hand-anything" attitude, and come right down to solid earth and actual conditions, and leave out phantasy. I say "half", for it is not a question of giving up that which is true in the "artist" or the "hand-made" attitude, but that which is false.

The next step is to get rid of the idea of the machine as an enemy. The machine is an extention of the tool; the tool of the hand; the hand of the brain; and it is only the *unfaithful* use of

machinery which we can attack. It is here that Industry is to blame - just where it is unfaithful to *Life* in putting money values first. Science which has invented machinery in the XIX century, is no enemy of life, but "business first" has turned it into a bully, a slave-driver, and a cheat. Art which is the outcome and proof of life, must come into the firm again in the XX century as an equal partner, or there will be disaster.

Art has been a horrid "veneer" in trade so far, but that is wrong, for beauty is an inherent demand of human nature, and work done without it is a starvation diet bound in the long run to produce disorder. The enjoyment of work for its own sake is what we individual craftsmen and women have to offer to an age which has mistaken the means for the end. It is this rather than shorter hours and longer pay which is at the root of our industrial unrest.

The widened demands of the increased population of the world make inevitable the mass-production of many utensils. It is good that machinery should stamp the iron of a railway track, or the glazed bricks of London Tubes - better than that it should be done by hand - plain, and clean, and strong and no nonsense about it! But that does not mean that labour should be employed eight hours a day, year in year out, upon mechanical work which gives no play to its creative faculties, for that is ROBOT work. With the increase of mass-production shorter hours are bound to come, and with them the time and energy for individual and home production with power supplied by electricity.

Granting then the need of industry and the function of the machine to reproduce with fidelity, the first necessity in pottery is obviously to reproduce good pots. This simply is not done. There are no commercial pots being made which can hold a

candle to the classics I have mentioned for beauty. The merits which fall within the industrial scale are utilitarian and comparative, the larger historic, human, aesthetic values are unperceived. There are no hills on this horizon.

The pottery manager needs the collaboration of a man whose sense of fitness has not been crushed, a man who can design plates, cups, tea-pots, handles, spouts etc., in terms of clay and glaze with intimate knowledge of process. A knowledge of process. A knowledge that I can only describe as a sense of wholeness in which use and beauty find a new unity. He must enjoy each phase of the work himself and be able to convey that joy to his team. The work must become an end in itself and not a mere means to an end. He should know and really feel the rightness of the relationship between work, tool, and material which long ages had evolved before mechanization came, and not just have run perfunctorily through a course in historic ornament. We have no evidence of the existence of such a man in the trade today. But in other crafts, such as printing, the thing has been done. In any case it can be only a matter of time.

There is a chasm which urgently needs spanning, but before a useful bridge can be built there must be sounder foundations and a truer understanding between the business man, the scientist, and the artist-craftsman. Progressive firms have been working in this direction even in pottery, but it can be safely stated that nothing approaching the standard I have mentioned has been reached yet. Whichever side the initiative comes from first, matters little. Efforts from both sides are wanted - the factory needs quality, and we hand-workers must produce in greater quantity if we are to bring the prices of our pots down to a level at which our friends can purchase them for use. That is

my essential point viz., that we free craftsmen must supply an actual need to a much greater extent than we have hitherto done. This will involve an element of restraint on the part of the potter-artist which will bring him in closer contact with life, and thereby provide a discerning public with pots in which utility and beauty are one. This business of going back as confederated purists to the hand which preceeded the machine has served its purposes. The next step awaits us.

In Japan a small pottery such as mine would have a sort of family of half a dozen expert craftsmen each trained to a particular job from childhood in a very definite tradition. Two kinds of pots would be made, the "bread and butter" pot, such as tea sets, sold at a moderate price, and pieces very carefully selected from each firing and correspondingly valued.

It is worth while noting in passing that the mental foot-binding which prevails in all these centres of traditional craft is a thing which has to be experienced to be believed. As long as that underlying spirit of race and place answers the slow change of circumstance the work done has national vitality, but when the barriers fall, and demand becomes suddenly international, and quite beyond the experience of the men in those work-shops, the springs dry up. Then a long time is bound to elapse before individual and conscious craftsmen emerge who can deal with the situation.

In Tokio I made shapes and patterns with the same enthusi-asm as I spent on drawing and etchings, without thinking very much at first about utility and price. The pots were bought by people who looked, and were accustomed to looking, for the same essential qualities in handicraft as in so called pure art. By degrees I paid more attention to use, but it was only when I

returned to England that I found, as in so many ways, an opposite tendency, a valuation as matter of course of the utilities first and the spirit second. It was impossible to continue here in so "idealistic" a condition as to make just what I liked with only kiln and saggers as my limit.

The first daily-use pottery I was asked for was invariably a tea-set, but without the eastern teamwork, or our western machinery, the effort, especially at high temperature, is both back and heart-breaking. Making nothing else, I have calculated that by hard work I and a couple of apprentices could produce some 200 fifteen piece sets in a year, and we would have to sell them all at about £5 per set to keep going. I have often been asked why, given a good sample hand-made pot, it cannot be reproduced indefinitely by machinery. In the first place your hand-made pot has to be translated into factory terms of devitalised clay, of plaster moulds, of unvarying thin fritted glazes, of coke-fed muffle kilns, and most of all, of men and girls who care so little for their dull jobs: the process is not faithful enough, not humanly comprehensive enough to reproduce living beauty. Secondly there is not the will on the part of the Industry. Thirdly, there is a chain of middlemen, with orders in their pockets, who have a fatal capacity for under-estimating latent public taste.

During my absence in the East I had become aware through books of our old English slip-ware, and one of my chief objects in returing was to permeate my work with its spirit. Since 1920, Hamada, Michael Cardew and I have revived the technique of the 17th Century slip-ware potter. Cardew and I have tried moreover to provide sound hand-made pots sufficiently inexpensive for people of moderate means to take into daily use. But my own experience which culminated last year in an exhibition

at the Three Shield's Gallery in Kensington, has taught me that however much this ware expressed the English national temperament of one or two hundred years ago, it does not fit in with modern life. Its earthy and homely nature belongs to the kitchen, the cottage, and the country. Many refuse it because it only harmonizes with the whitewash, oak, iron, leather, and pewter of "Old England" - moods which have been creatively "worked out", however much I as an individual, or a few others, may have needed this experience as part of our personal growth. We cannot forego those other qualifications, of thinness, hardness, non-porosity, and light toned colour.

I then determined to see how far I could succeed in making semi-porcelainous stoneware. I have reason for a belief that under favourable conditions it is possible to make household pottery with some of the qualities of the "Sung" or "Tang" wares of China. Such pots would satisfy the finer taste and the practical needs of today. The aesthetic perception of the modern French stoneware potter-artists since as far back as the "eighties" proves it. They, as usual, are in a much more advanced position with regard to their manufacturers, middlemen, and public than we are here. But there was a significant interest shown in their work during the recent Paris Exhibition by our trade potters: a leven is at work. The gradual acceptance of eastern classic standards is an accomplished fact, and the museums of Europe and America have during the past twenty years set the period of greatest achievement in Far Eastern art back by many centuries. These among other factors are producing an international public, not very large, but growing, which has a new classic conception of pottery. And it is chiefly through its vague perception of our gropings towards a new synthesis that we

individual potters exist. *Barriers of time and place have broken down and we craftsmen who have been named "artist" have the whole world to draw upon for incentive beauty. It is struggle enough to keep one's head in this maelstrom, to live truly, and work sanely without that sustaining and restraining power of "tradition" which guided all the yesterdays of applied art. Such nevertheless, as I see things, is our task and our priviledge.

The outward changes I am making in my Pottery are very gradual, for any sudden alteration of equipment to a mechanical basis is out of the question. Each power driven device for saving monotonous human effort has to be tested not only, as in the industrial world, for efficiency, but also for what I have called its artistic faithfulness. An illustration may be useful:- In a Japanese pottery the impure cobalt ore which yields the lovely blues of old porcelain, is ground by hand for months on end by some old woman, who reads the paper, or chats, or sings to the quietly working painters. I have asked the latter repeatedly what difference there was between colour so ground and the same ore ground by power, and they have invariably said that the "qual

* In my own case the problem has been circumstanced by my birth in China and education in England. I have naturally had the antipodes of culture to draw upon, and it was this which caused me to return to Japan where the meeting of East and West has gone furthest. Living among the younger men, emancipated from the shackles of the past, I have with them learned to lean forward in the faith of a binding together of those elements from the ends of the earth which are now welding the civilization of the coming age. The potter, in his concepts, must possess such a sheer love of truth as will carry him past the dangers of revivalism on the one hand and of futurism on the other. With his elements of clay, water, fire and air he must, as long as he lives, strive fearlessly to clothe his vision in a garment of living beauty.

ity" of the power-ground pigment for fine painting on porcelain was very inferior. It would seem that the microscopic granules of the hand-ground colour have greater variety, and that the tendency, as with the use of every new source of power, is towards abuse, or thoughtless over-use.

Actually, my first steps have been to begin with a change from wood to oil-firing, and from hand-grinding to power-grinding, and I shall not hesitate to put in an electrically-driven potter's wheel as soon as I can find a silent and efficient one. When it comes to the question of multiplying production, the complexity increases. I have not gone further than to have tiles made in quantity by semi-mechanical means, thereby halving the price, and to devote the time saved in wood-cutting, grinding etc. to the reduplication of the more useful stoneware jugs, vases, bowls etc. by the old hand processes.

It may seem to some critics that craftsmen like myself can serve the most useful purpose, and incidentally be a great deal happier, by remaining free in our crafts, and not attempting tasks which they would probably describe as foredoomed to failure. Though they may be right as far as immediate success is concerned, I beg to differ. Instead I ask for support for a tentative and difficult undertaking.

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Sussex.
A.D. 1928.

took the artists with him, and left the British behind. It is to be hoped that Mr. Sickert will at last effect a reunion.

The comparative tameness of this year's exhibition at Burlington House has given additional prominence to the retrospective exhibition of the London Group. The interest caused by this revelation of the fine work done by the younger English artists is already changing the attitude of some of the more conservative firms of picture-dealers. Several Bond Street houses which have hitherto concentrated upon old masters or established reputations are now giving exhibitions on the strength of promising talent alone—a refreshing sign of confidence in English art.

It was too long considered that members of the Group were essentially "wild men." The Leicester Galleries exhibition of the late Spencer Gore's pictures brought to light a modern whose work was yet in the finest tradition of English landscape painting.

At the same galleries, the exhibition of work by the late Richard Innes was a further reminder that the younger generation in England have produced, and are producing, painting as interesting as any to be found abroad. The superstition that all which is new and good in art must come from across the Channel is gradually being exploded.

Insularity may be carried too far, however, and Mr. Kokoschka's show, while arousing much controversy, at least widens the vision. Expressionismus, Super-Realism, contribute something in the long run to the great body of art, though their immediate manifestations may be rather too exuberant. We are only now beginning to find out what is to take and what is to leave in cubism, and even post-impressionism.

A very personal, and delightfully witty rendering of the London scene is afforded by Miss Hamnett's drawings of London statues, exhibited at Messrs. Arthur Tooth and Sons. Those, and Mr. Cedric Morris's paintings shown at the same gallery are examples of the wisdom of opening Bond Street to the younger generation. Miss Hamnett has made a valuable contribution towards reviving in this country the almost extinct art of book-illustration.

A new society known as the Grubb Group has initiated in London the continental practice of showing in a restaurant—The Quo Vadis, 27 Dean Street. "Ars longa, Grub fugit" is the motto of the Group.

A promising sign of the interest taken in art in London is the growth of galleries and their improvement. Under the auspices of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, the old Grafton Gallery will re-open after elaborate reconstruction. The New English Art Club and the London Group are sharing an excellent new gallery in Burlington Gardens. And the Savile Gallery has now moved to rooms of admirable visibility and architectural charm in Stratford Place.

The Contemporary Art Society, to whom we are already indebted by its great public service in the purchase and exhibition of modern English and French works of art, has now opened a fund for the purchase of modern pottery and craft work. The work purchased will be offered to London, provincial and colonial museums for exhibition in the appropriate departments.

On July 19 the "Daily Telegraph" will present at Olympia the first international exhibition of antiques and works of art. It will be the first really comprehensive attempt to gather together the pick of both English and Continental wares of this nature and should perform a useful work of concentration for those who would not otherwise have the opportunity of visiting isolated collections.

PARIS.—*The Salons: Artistes Français, Nationale, Artistes Décorateurs, Tuileries.* With the best will in the world it is really impossible to discover any work of decisive importance in the combined exhibitions of the Artistes Français and the Nationale at the Grand Palais, except Forain's canvases. This exhibition includes, as usual, a wing for the Décorateurs. Since the best deserters from the Nationale founded the Salon des Tuileries, three years ago, it is in the hutments of the Palais de Bois that the living tendencies of contemporary French

PAINTINGS

by

BEN & WINIFRED NICHOLSON

and

POTTERY

by

STAITE MURRAY

JULY, 1928

THE LEFEVRE GALLERIES
(ALEX REID & LEFEVRE, LTD.)
1a, KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S
LONDON, S.W.1

LONDON, S.W.1

FOREWORD

THE three artists who are showing in this Exhibition form a most interesting trinity; their work is curiously synthetic since together ey make up one life, each containing something of e other, and yet each quite sharply working from individual basis. In Staite Murray the outward ject is material; objects of daily life, as usual to the e as people, and yet each with its secret inner life. Winifred Nicholson comes closer to the physical; a nsuous love of life's intimacy, but treated with a tality and a sparkle which makes her painting com-nionable and universal. The work of Ben Nicholson es us into a world of spirit—spacious yet intimate. e outward form of his idea is perhaps unusual, but eath it is that quick throbbing, common to all, of e in its spiritual rarity.

There is between his work and that of Braque a tain affinity, but it only serves to emphasise Ben cholson's value. He is less occupied with his ign and with his surface than Braque is, and he is re concerned with his idea. His colour is, in my nion, more varied and more subtle. His picture *is* idea, whether it appears in the form of jugs and tes, landscapes or flowers, and this it is which kes his design and his colour unalterably one with idea. Braque's might often, without change of a, be different from head to foot.

Winifred Nicholson is essentially a woman painter, d she stands, I think, foremost amongst those of

to-day. She does not endeavour to hide her sex in her work—she is proud of it, and brings to painting a woman's attitude which we cannot feel to be merely a weak version of a masculine one, any more than we feel this of Emily Brontë. They are both inherently feminine.

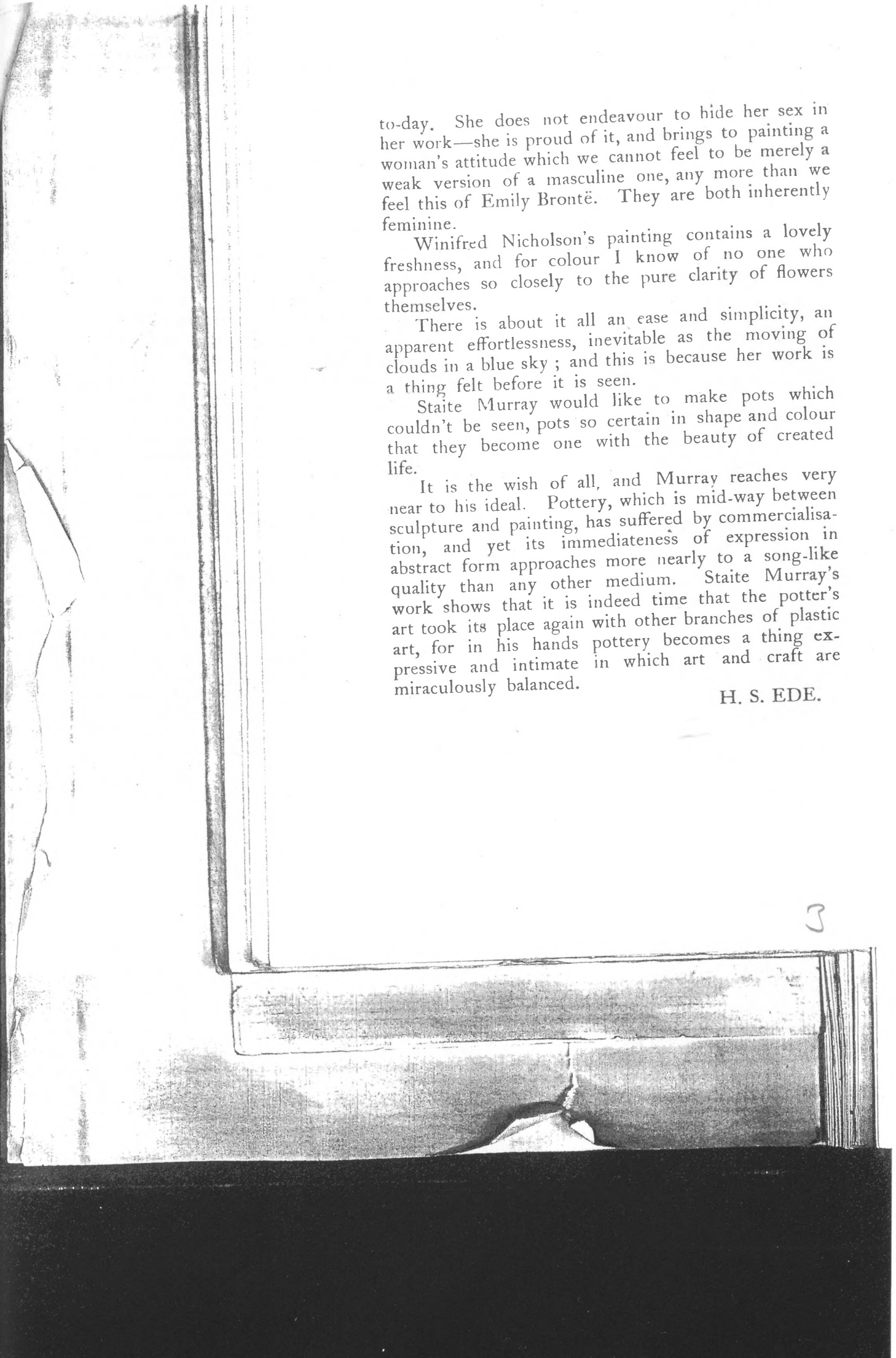
Winifred Nicholson's painting contains a lovely freshness, and for colour I know of no one who approaches so closely to the pure clarity of flowers themselves.

There is about it all an ease and simplicity, an apparent effortlessness, inevitable as the moving of clouds in a blue sky ; and this is because her work is a thing felt before it is seen.

Staite Murray would like to make pots which couldn't be seen, pots so certain in shape and colour that they become one with the beauty of created life.

It is the wish of all, and Murray reaches very near to his ideal. Pottery, which is mid-way between sculpture and painting, has suffered by commercialisation, and yet its immediateness of expression in abstract form approaches more nearly to a song-like quality than any other medium. Staite Murray's work shows that it is indeed time that the potter's art took its place again with other branches of plastic art, for in his hands pottery becomes a thing expressive and intimate in which art and craft are miraculously balanced.

H. S. EDE.



STONEWARE POTTERY.

As representing one of the most distinguished artists in Europe, the exhibition of stoneware pottery by Mr. Staite Murray at Mr. Paterson's Gallery, 5, Old Bond-street, hardly needs more than naming, but enjoyment prompts a few remarks. Technically master of his craft, and without prejudice to the possible utility of what he produces, Mr. Murray has now made of pottery a complete form of emotional expression, combining the more abstract possibilities of sculpture and painting. Each of his pots, vases, bowls, or dishes is moulded to a mood, none the less real for being indescribable in words, and always within the convention of pottery forms. Not the least remarkable thing about Mr. Murray's work, indeed, is its freedom from anything fantastic or extravagant in shape or colour. Its quality depends on subtle modifications of curve and proportion under the plastic impulse. His general aim at present appears to be to control the abstract under a naturalistic suggestion, and many of his pieces are named after birds, animals, flowers, or landscape effects.

On the analogy of programme music this might be called programme pottery—without, of course, implying any direct imitation of nature. The most that is done is to "point" the suggestion with brush or incised decoration—as a comment in words might be made on the meaning of music. Two pieces which may be quoted in illustration are the tall, grey vase, with a purple splash, entitled "Heron" (42) and the somewhat similar "Pheasant" (18). The second is decorated with a summary brush drawing of the bird, but it is not more than a comment on what is already felt in the movement of the shape as compared with that of the other. Other examples of this pointing of a formal tendency inherent in the whole shape, colour, and surface of the piece are "Cow"—which says "Moo!" as plainly as a pot can speak—"Taurus," "Cockerels and Grasses," and "Geese by the Reeds." Some free brush drawings of flowers in water-colour by the same artist are included in the exhibition.

The pottery by Mr. Michael Cardew, in the English slipware tradition, at the New Handworkers' Gallery, 14, Percy-street, Tottenham Court-road, is so entirely different in aim and object that it will not suffer by being noticed in the same article as Mr. Murray's. The idea here is to supply at a moderate price a simple domestic ware of good artistic quality as made by an individual potter. What Mr. Cardew is able to do in the conditions is astonishing. In both form and glazing

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... providing each picture with a note in the catalogue explaining its philosophical meaning. Looked at as a whole the pictures make a by no means displeasing frieze on the walls of the galleries, and if the visitor is not artistically or emotionally thrilled by the exhibition his sense of order, at least, is not disturbed.

The really impressive thing about the exhibition is the continuity with which the idea is kept up throughout the series—embracing both the Old and the New Testament. The idea itself is not a present concern, but it does not strike me as being very profound. For convenience the introduction to the catalogue may be quoted: "The subject matter of the Bible is the failing of a purely spiritual being which, seduced by the enticements of the flesh, falls—the sin of a pure spirit abasing itself by accomplishing Desire. The regrets of the fallen one, his agonies in the bonds of the flesh, to which he abandons himself in a moment of oblivion, then his endeavour to free himself, his painful struggle, and finally his triumph over himself: these are the drama and its conclusion."

M. Sarluis has at any rate followed the idea consistently through the series, and exercised considerable ingenuity in adapting the subjects to the idea. For his purposes he makes no distinction between history and parable. His treatment of the subjects is inventive rather than imaginative—there is no hint of the vision that we compel to Blake—and he has great facility as a designer. In style the pictures take a middle ground between illustration and symbolism, thus dispensing, legitimately, with the need for historical or archæological accuracy, though the general effect is "Biblical." The most obvious defect of the pictures, as pictures, is their reliance for intensity upon facial expression, and this increases as the series goes on and the theme rises emotionally, so that the Old Testament pictures are very much better than the New. The best of them are crowded compositions, with a good deal of architecture and astronomy thrown in; "The War Between the Two Sons of Solomon," with a battle going on in the foreground and a causeway zigzagging backward and upward to a primitive building, is probably the best design of all. As an artistic experience the exhibition makes no very deep impression, but it is not unlikely that it may inspire a good many discourses in the pulpit.

MR. BERNARD LEACH.

To anybody who follows closely the many handicraft exhibitions of the moment it must be evident that a stage has been reached for some better adjust... was born in China and learnt his craft in Japan—needs no introduction. With Mr. Staite Murray he may be regarded as justifying his existence by the standard he sets in his personal output. Nobody would grumble if he went on producing what are, in effect, "museum pieces." His exhibits at the Beaux Arts Gallery are, broadly, of that description; creations in form, colour, and surface quality, which, though they may be used, need no justification in utility. Like certain rare people, we accept them for what they are. For present purposes description may be waived, but "Grey Celadon Bowl in Stoneware" (117), "Dish, Celadon; incised pattern" (6), "Bottle, Crackled white" (23), "Jar with two handles and flattened sides; chestnut brown" (25), may be named for special qualities.

At the New Handworkers Gallery, and without—having regard to the changed conditions—lowering the standard of quality, Mr. Leach abandons what may be called the museum attitude, and comes down into the living room with jugs, tea sets, porridge bowls, what not. They are sensible and friendly in shape and pleasant in colour—grey, olive green, buff, brown, black—and some of the pieces have a simple brush decoration. What it amounts to—and, as he explains in a pamphlet, "A Potter's Outlook," to be obtained at the gallery—is that in these wares Mr. Leach has pushed down the possibilities of the private kiln about as far as they will go to meet the factory on economic terms. At a rough-and-ready calculation the relation is about that of five to three. That is to say, in a comparable quality—exact comparison is, of course, impossible—Mr. Leach cannot produce for less than 5s. the cup and saucer that the factory can produce at 3s. On these terms there can be no competition between the private kiln and the factory in wares "for daily use," and the line of progress would seem to be the gradual absorption of the artistic potter into the factory—in a relationship which it would need an expert to determine. This, of course, is not to say that Mr. Leach's wares at the New Handworkers Gallery will not be eagerly bought, but only to suggest a way out of an unsatisfactory situation.

"THE WELL OF LONELINESS."

The appeal against an order made by Sir Chartres Biron, the Bow-street Magistrate, on November 16, that a number of copies of Miss Radclyffe Hall's novel "The Well of Loneliness" should be destroyed, on the ground that it was an obscene book, has been fixed for hearing at the London Sessions on Friday, December 14.

British ... induced ... in the ... Imperial ... large amo... of comme... record th... working ... a definite ... were ent... ing the li... under the ... by which ... of tender... contract.

The pr... the conti... tions, so ... State sho... ance that ... transport ... ledge of ... route. I... ment bet... not been ... reached a...

COAL-...

RAILW...

It was ... negotiatio... Railway ... there is ... company ... tipping ... recalled ... announce... coal tips ... reduced ... economy. ... the major... merce, bu... the Corpo... decided t... Pole agai... tions from ... to-morrow...

At the ... mittee th... the railw... signed on ... way Com... tain in ... and other... The tips ... efficient ... specially ... wagons. ... few days ... the prop... reduction ... means ... desired ... facilities.

The ... Penarth, ... with the ... sacrifices, ... Sunday ...

ment between private and factory production. On the one hand we have an increasing number of artist-craftsmen—a silly name, but no better can be devised to cover the meaning—producing wares of high artistic quality at prohibitive prices, and on the other factories turning out inexpensive wares of generally good technical quality but lacking in vitality and in the refinements of form and colour. Since in certain trades, printing for example, a fruitful relationship has been established between the studio and the workshop there should be no insuperable obstacle to the same condition in all, but—for technical reasons which need not be discussed here—it is clear that no general system can be adopted. Every industry requires its own kind of relationship between the artist and the artisan. For this reason there is a special interest in the present exhibitions of pottery by Mr. Bernard Leach: of—to use his own catalogue descriptions—"Stoneware Pottery" at the Beaux Arts Gallery, Bruton-place; and "Stoneware for Daily Use," at the New Handworkers' Gallery, 14, Percy-street.

As an artistic potter Mr. Leach—who was born in China and learnt his craft in Japan—needs no introduction. With Mr. Staite Murray he may be regarded as justifying his existence by the standard he sets in his personal output. Nobody would grumble if he went on producing what are, in effect, "museum pieces." His exhibits at the Beaux Arts Gallery are, broadly, of that description; creations in form, colour, and surface quality, which, though they may be used, need no justification in utility. Like certain rare people, we accept them for what they are. For present purposes description may be waived, but "Grey Celadon Bowl in Stoneware" (17), "Dish, Celadon: incised pattern" (6), "Bottle, Crackled white" (23), "Jar with two handles and flattened sides; chestnut brown" (25), may be named for special qualities.

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GWENDOLEN PARNELL AND HER CHELSEA CHEYNE FIGURES

By MRS. STEUART ERSKINE

In them, in the best of them, we have concentrated, in a manner impossible to any other art object, all the beauties that exist in form and all the joys that can be given only by colour. In this respect china figures are unique, supreme, and unapproachable. FRANK RUTTER.

THESE words, written by one of our foremost art critics, crystallize in a happy phrase the very essence of the little " unapproachable " art as it is exemplified in the Parnell figures. This new development of a forgotten art, which has its roots in a tradition of which it is yet independent, is not easy to describe. One point, brought forward in the words quoted above, must be stressed—the importance of colour. The figures are seen by their creator in colour, and colour is part of their significance as well as of their charm. However finely the form is reproduced, the loss of colour must be taken into account.

And now a word about the artist and the manner in which her attention was turned to a branch of art in which she has achieved such signal success.

Gwendolen Parnell, one of a family of nine, started as an art student at South Kensington, later studying painting under Herr Professor Knirr in Munich. After she returned to England she made no plans, but kept portrait painting as her ultimate goal, although she took up black-and-white work for illustration temporarily, as being more immediately profitable. Up to this time she had entered only the borderland of the two great kingdoms of colour and form, of painting and sculpture, and was hesitating which path to pursue, when the great upheaval of 1914 brought her studies to an abrupt conclusion.

A patriotic appeal in the " Times," asking artists to manufacture enemy products, found Miss Parnell gravely examining a small china ornament with puzzled attention. It was a clumsy cupid, attached to a bulky *bocage*, something that had never come into the worlds of South Kensington or Munich; uncouth as it was, it marked a milestone in her artistic career.

At that time no studio potters were making figures. Dwight, of Fulham, worked in 1690, Sprimont, of Chelsea, in 1750; into the No Man's Land where lay the graves of the eighteenth century no pioneer explorer had ventured. The artist seemed to hear the spirit of Sprimont calling and calling over the waste. She asked herself, in the words of the Prophet, " Can these dry bones live ? " She was quite alone in her venture, a fact that may be obscured because of the host of eager followers that came in the wake of the merchant adventurer. There was no one to advise her, and she set to work with a lump of clay, a paper-knife, and a hairpin to model her first figure.

FIG. I. RETREATING AMAZON
By Gwendolen Parnell

" Can these dry bones live ? " The answer was forthcoming with startling swiftness. Three years of strenuous endeavour and dogged toil — she frequently worked for fourteen hours a day — then the discovery, first by the Press, then by the world at large. From the very first her work was acclaimed as that of an original genius, not only in England, but on the Continent and in America.

DECORATIVE ART 1929

Edited by C. Geoffrey Holme and Shirley B. Wainwright

LONDON: THE STUDIO, LTD., 44 LEICESTER SQ.
"THE STUDIO" YEAR-BOOK

POTTERY AND GLASSWARE

THE outstanding and remarkable feature of the Pottery and Glass Section this year is the space devoted entirely to industrial products, including the work of the British manufacturer, which mark a big advance in industrial art. It is most encouraging that it has been possible to fill these particular pages with examples of manufactured products, through the much maligned channel of Industry. For years the plea for Design in Industry would appear to have fallen on deaf ears, and to all intents and purposes the appeal had been deliberately ignored by the generality of manufacturers, and had lacked encouragement from the majority of retail distributors. That so many of the articles included are to be purchased in the shops is yet another helpful sign.

Looking at the illustrations in detail, we have a story of great interest, and one of inspiration to all those who have set out to encourage the production of worthier goods to beautify the homes of the people.

Without referring directly to each individual, there are some names that demand attention.

Bernard Leach presents to us domestic wares suitable to their environment, made in Cornwall from Cornish clay, which are an entirely commercial proposition. We know Bernard Leach and his years of research work in Japan; we know his pieces of individual work, at prices only within reach of the collector of rare gems of the potter's craft. We have watched the development of his work, and now we have from him those things that fulfil all his ideals, but that are within reasonable reach of the person of taste. The artist-craftsman has set himself to supply cultural needs that are not necessarily supported by ample means, and this means more than appears on the surface. Over and over again, some of us have pleaded that tasteful things could be provided for the wealthy—although the wealthy one might be devoid of taste—but the discouraging feature of life in the machine age is that the man of small means and good taste has not been free to please himself, but has had to put up with the cheap imitation. We now pass at a stride from Leach to Woolworth, and find that a striking example is set before us in the illustrations of glass purchasable for sixpence.

It says much for the real function of the Press that it can in pictures convey a parable so full of subtle meaning. Does it not reveal a fact of life, too often overlooked by Artist, Industrialist and Retailer-Distributor, that good taste and a desire to possess things of beauty are not a question of class? And so at Woolworth's, we may indulge our good taste, and make our selection to our entire satisfaction for a nimble sixpence. The work of the Ashtead Potters is one of the most remarkable (for want of a better word) developments of Industrial Art that can be cited. The story of its rapid growth would be more than sufficient in itself to fill this Section. By its means, many theories, pet theories, that had never been put to the test in the same way, have become practical and commercial possibilities.

One repeats "commercial," because the word commercial is used to cover a multitude of the misdeeds of manufacturers and retailers alike.

A band of disabled ex-soldiers, broken and worn by years of pain, whose lives were worth more than mere philanthropy, were set to work with strange

THE TIMES, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1930

ART EXHIBITIONS

MR. STAITE MURRAY

CATALOGUE

of

Pottery, Paintings and Furniture

by

STAITE MURRAY

November, 1930

ALEX. REID & LEFEVRE, LTD.
(THE LEFEVRE GALLERIES)
la, KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S
LONDON, S.W. 1

THE TIMES, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1930

ART EXHIBITIONS

MR. STAITE MURRAY

THE APPRECIATION OF POTTERY

POTTERY is at once the simplest and most difficult of all arts. It is the simplest because it is the most elemental; it is the most difficult because it is the most abstract. Historically it is among the first of the arts. The earliest vessels were shaped by hand from crude clay dug out of the earth, and such vessels were dried in the sun and wind. Even at that stage, before man could write, before he had a literature or even a religion, he had this art, and the vessels then made can still move us by their expressive form. When fire was discovered, and man learned to make his pots hard and durable, and when the wheel was invented, and the potter could add rhythm and uprising movement to his concepts of form, then all the essentials of this most abstract art were present. The art evolved from its humble origins until, in the fifth century before Christ, it became the representative art of the most sensitive and intellectual race that the world has ever known. A Greek vase is the type of all classical harmony. Then eastward another great civilisation made pottery its best-loved and most typical art, and even carried the art to rarer refinements than the Greeks had attained. A Greek vase is static harmony, but the Chinese vase, when once it has freed itself from the imposed influences of other cultures and other techniques, achieves dynamic harmony; it is not only a relation of numbers, but also a living movement. Not a crystal, but a flower.

The perfect types of pottery, represented in the art of Greece and China, have their approximations in other lands: in Peru and Mexico, in Medieval England and Spain. In Italy of the Renaissance, in Eighteenth-Century Germany—in fact, the art is so fundamental, so bound up with the elementary needs of civilisation, that a national ethos *must* find its expression in this medium. Judge the art of a country, judge the fineness of its sensibility, by its pottery; it is a sure touchstone. Pottery is pure art; it is art freed from any imitative intention. Sculpture, to which it is most nearly related, had from the first an imitative intention, and is perhaps to that extent less free for the expression of the will to form than pottery; pottery is plastic art in its most abstract essence.

Let us not be afraid of this word "abstract." All art is primarily abstract. For what is æsthetic experience, deprived of its incidental trappings and associations, but a response of the body and mind of man to invented or isolated harmonies. Art is an escape from chaos. It is movement ordained in numbers; it is mass confined in measure; it is the indetermination of matter seeking the economy of life. These processes are nakedly revealed in pottery. Therefore be simple and open-minded in the presence of a pot; remember

> that there are powers
> Which of themselves our minds impress,
> That we can feed this mind of ours
> In a wise passiveness.

That was said by Wordsworth of the powers of nature; it is no less true of art when art in its abstraction creates powers of a more transcendental kind.

X. X.

2

NGLISH STONEWARE POTTERY BY MISS K. PLEYDELL-BOUVERIE AND MISS D. K. N. BRADEN

By W. A. Thorpe

URING the past hundred years there have been in the main three tendencies in English pottery. The oldest of the Staffordshire tradition, has an trial basis, and in form and ornament most to the classical revival at the end he 18th century. Wedgwood, whose tenary has been celebrated this year, always be regarded as the founder and het of this movement, not because the rdshire potters have always followed him, ecause he more than anyone else created taffordshire technique and the taste it has d. There have been other contributions affordshire styles—the rich blue and gold rench extraction and a floral ornament h is mainly English in character. There besides, the plastic amusements of the statuettes, and certain lodging-house rities of the 1830's. But when all allow- has been made for these and other ences Wedgwood still remains the chief . Wedgwood was a good potter, but omantic austerities are worn out.

he second phase is Preraphaelite in in and in sentiment. The essence of it vival. It has been expressed on the one in William de Morgan's emulation of nic lustre, and on the other in a type of ery which is congenial to what one may the 'frugality' movement. One parent rugalism is the art-and-craftiness of the phaelites, its other parent the modern e to escape from towns into the country, civilization into genteel savagery, to be itive, and to produce children's books for wn-up people. This escape is as much a of the civilization of to-day as steel tures or abstract design, but like its pre- ssors it reveres a past. Attic shapes and beauty of holiness have been replaced, but the noble savage lives again, in cottage interiors with monochrome curtains. So frugalism joins with the little gabled homes that the building societies have cleverly built, and the oaken tea-shops that no one can quite avoid in towns or hope to discover in the country. It rejoices in bare floors and coloured mats and dark polish and earthenware. It looks back to the farmhouse kitchen as it is believed to have been, and strikes the note of that primal grandeur in flats and villas, where people live who have seen cows from cars, and work off their soilhood by toying with a back-garden. The pottery of frugalism is old English slipware; but good red earthiness, not slip, is the important thing. Not that I wish to speak against earthenware. With its appropriate slips and glazes it is the only mode of pottery to maintain its line unbroken from the 13th century till the 19th. Some of the best pots in the world have been made in it, and it still proves fertile in good pots; but it is always rude. It belongs to a civilization which no longer exists except in vestiges and resurrections. Apt in its setting, it will not bear transplantation to a modern interior. The potters who practise it are true to their art, but at the cost of being false to their age.

Pottery, like sculpture, is related to architecture; it is the servant of the interior as well as being its own master. Chinese pottery will answer to any interior, and for that reason may be claimed as a universal pottery, in a sense that Staffordshire or slipware can never be. For that reason, too, the modern stoneware potters who start from the Chinese have the best chance of making an art of to-day and, what is more, an art for to-morrow. By modern stoneware pottery I mean the work of Mr. Bernard Leach, the Vyses, Mr. Staite

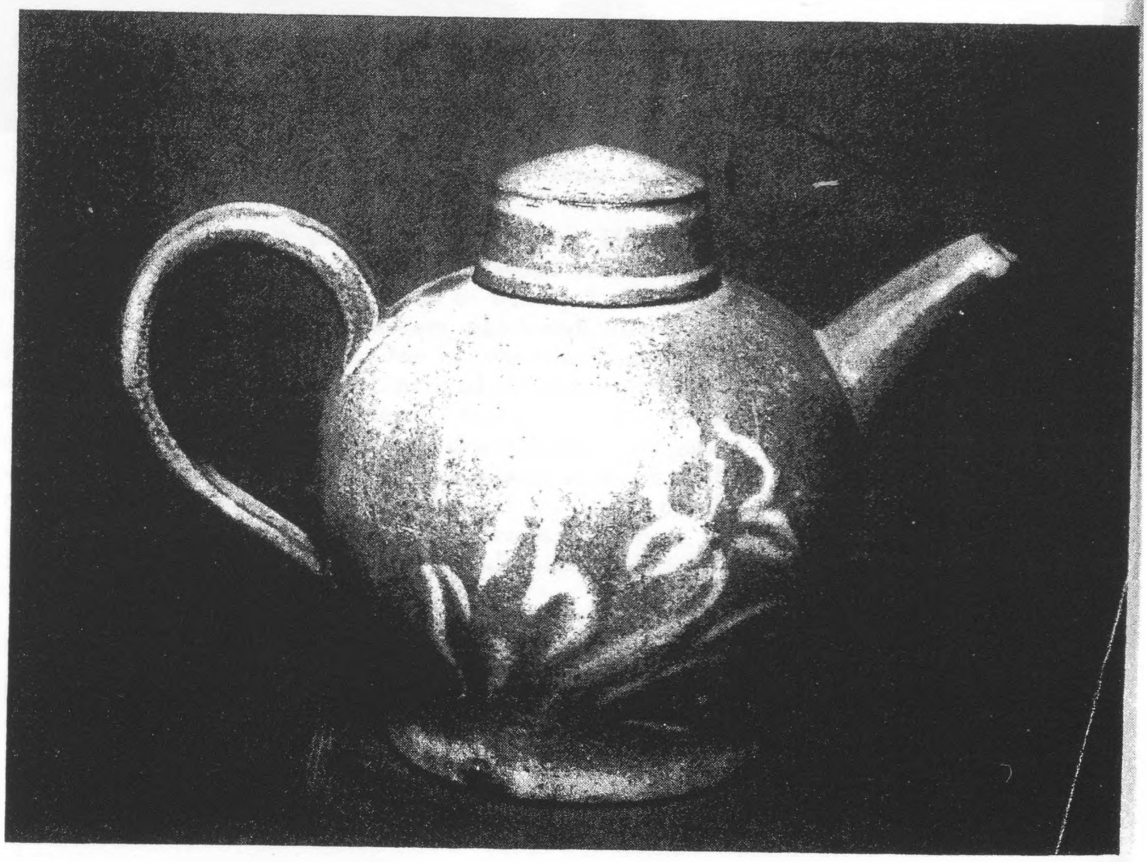
LEACH AND TOMIMOTO

The combined exhibition by Kenkichi Tomimoto and Bernard Leach at the Beaux Arts Galleries, May 1951

By BERNARD LEACH

BETWEEN Japanese art and craft there has never existed the gulf which the machine has cleft in our English life. Weavers, lacquerers, potters, smiths, not only produced beautiful and unconscious traditional work in the countryside, but they were linked to the towns and to the court by a priesthood of art such as no other country has ever produced. I refer to the Tea Masters of Japan. They and their significance in the history of art are far too little known to us, despite the existence of the "Book of Tea" by Okakura which is among that small company of key books to the inner life of the Far East. Okakura's was the last brave voice of the Old Order which centred in the conscious focus of those little "Tea Room" gatherings of æsthetes where the classic standards of art were evolved which formed the cannon for the whole country.

Conscious æstheticism may be a dangerous thing, as it indeed proved to be when the creative energy of Japan flagged into a



The Studio Vol CI No 458

May 1931

WEST AND EAST

...ite: A stoneware teapot in grey, inlaid with cream, by Tomimoto. Above: A group by Bernard Leach. (Photo, Studio Films)

...servative formalism, but it is a stage in ... evolution of art and a great deal may ... learned by the receptive observation of ... process in that part of the East where ... original asymetric impetus of thought ... received from Laot'ze and developed ... lines as far removed from our classical ...eco-Roman concepts as possible.

In fact we have had the ferment at work ... more than fifty years, ever since the ...nch Impressionists became interested in ...anese Woodcuts, and Whistler wiped ... Morris patterns off English walls. But ...pite the largely unconscious effect upon ...zanne and Van Gogh and all subsequent ... we have stopped short, we have not consciously plumbed the depths. How many men in England have grasped at the roots of Japanese standards of beauty? Where is the book or museum which indicates such a perception? One in which a Tea Master would not feel inclined to smile sadly.

So much at least I feel it necessary to say before speaking of a draughtsman and potter whose work at once contains so much of the essence of "Tea" and so little of the "schools." The latter we have with us, but this other, which I call after Okakura's habit, "Tea," what is it?

Unless we have something of the kind, or have had in the past, it cannot be important because it will not be universal.

I cannot encompass the concept with many or with few words, but if I can add to Okakura's masterpiece a hint I shall be content.

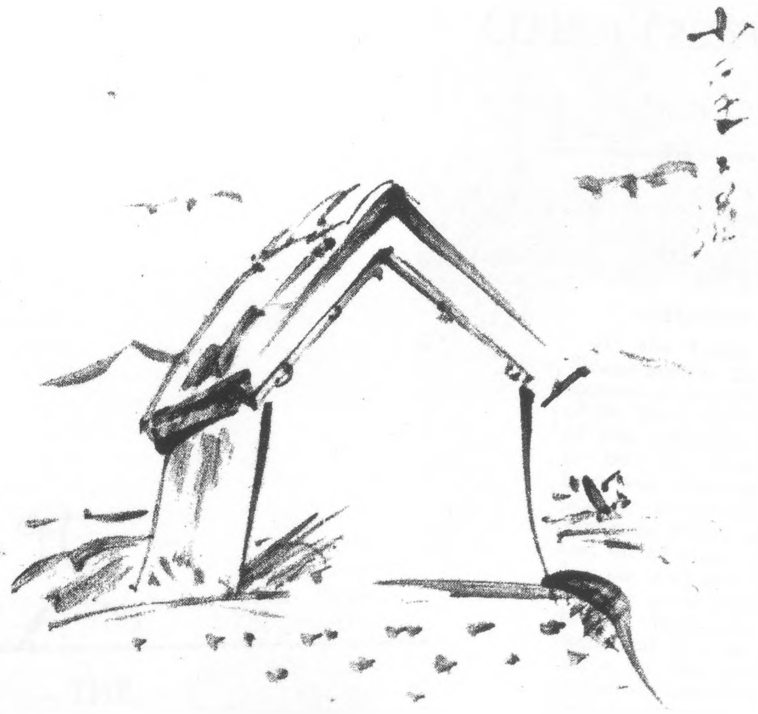
Let me suggest then as the equivalent of "Tea" our word "Salt." That which gives savour to the mass, a thing harsh in itself. Further the adjective "shibui," which in Japanese denotes the character of "things of Tea," must be translated as austere or astringent, and it is this reverent sense of the privacy of beauty hidden behind the commonplace, derived from Buddhism, which is universal. If for a moment we imagine Blake's "grain of sand" to be a bowl of fragrant tea we shall have the very atmosphere of the Tea Room and further-more an explanation of why William Blake is so profoundly admired in Japan.

"To see a World in a Grain of Sand,
And Heaven in a Wild Flower,
And hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour."

KENKICHI TOMIMOTO has been one of my closest friends for just over 20 years. I had not long been launched upon this quest for beauty of clay, of abstract form, of evocative pattern, of brush-work, of colour and texture of glaze, when I first encountered Tomimoto. He was then a young architect and student of decorative art just returned from journeys in India and two or three years study in London. I was so much attracted by the sharp eloquence of his drawings and woodcuts that when he could find no better opening in Tokio than that of hack draughtsman in an architect's office, I suggested that he too should turn to clay. The very first pot he ever made was thrown upon my wheel and may be seen at the Beaux Arts Gallery.

He would laugh at it now for its over-gay colour and untutored calligraphy, but I believe others, besides myself, will find in it promise and beauty enough to banish thought of laughter. The potter who made it is now claimed in Japan to be the greatest brush-

in porcelain with blue work, by Tomimoto. osite: Milk Jug in celadon and Cigar- Box, by Bernard Leach Photo, Studio Films)



k master since the end of the Ming nasty.

1911 I sent a Japanese boy, my first stant, to Mr. Tomimoto's home near a to help him build his first kiln. In giv- him the traditional recipes, given to me rn by my master the sixth Kenzan, we e a compact to exchange freely and odically all the information which we d gather concerning old ways of making ery. We kept that pact and our friend- intact, he a Japanese and I a foreigner is land, whilst openly vying with each r for ten years in our Tokio exhibitions. ears later when Tomimoto visited him rly before his death from shock after great earthquake and fire of 1923, zan expressed his gladness that he had able to pass on to us his tradition and wledge.

lthough our relationship had always warm and open, I felt this message the in so far as I had never been an appren- in the strict old sense. That was im- ble to either Tomimoto or myself for re both of the modern world and its consciousness, individualism, and width of outlook are very alien to the background of traditional craft to which Kenzan belonged. For this reason it is difficult to convey an adequate idea of the sense of isolation we each experienced in different ways in a busy world of handcraft turning towards machine-craft. It would have been different in the vital days of " Tea." As it was we had to find our own ways towards personal form and pattern, translating these into terms of the technique which Kenzan offered us.

There were no others in the field until 1919 when Hamada came as a student and visited my kilns near Tokio and asked me to take him over to England as my assistant.

I shall conclude this sketchy review by suggesting the main characteristics of the three Japanese potters whom I have mentioned.

Hamada, sturdy and dependable—the spirit of northern China, Tomimoto, sharp and subtle like the quick and vital south of the Malay Archipelago. Kawai, the third of modern Japanese potters—a virtuoso—brilliant but less original.

1399

M B. Leach

From — THE —

GENERAL PRESS CUTTING ASSOCIATION, LTD.

13, FARRINGDON AVENUE, E.C.4.

TELEPHONE - - - CENTRAL 2684

Cutting from the Times

Issue dated 29. 10. 31

STONEWARE POTTERY

At the Little Gallery, 3, Ellis-street, Sloane-street, there is an exhibition of stoneware pottery by Mr. Bernard Leach, of St. Ives, Cornwall. The special point of this exhibition is that the articles in it—pots for flowers, jugs, vases, grape-fruit and other bowls, ash trays, covered pots for preserves, and pots planted with Japanese dwarf trees—are mostly small, and all of them are intended for every-day use and are inexpensive. As a rule, and for good reasons, questions of price do not come into notices of art exhibitions, but in this case price is a definite factor in the artistic—or at any rate technical—problem, and it may be said that the average price of the articles is about half a guinea. What Mr. Leach is trying to do, in short, is to push the resources of the small private kiln, staffed by two or three people, as far as they will go to meet factory production. It is not a case of attempted competition—hand-thrown can never compete economically with moulded wares—but an attempt to narrow the gulf between the two kinds in artistic quality. As things are at present we have half a dozen private potters, like Mr. Leach, who are unexcelled—if they are equalled—in Europe, but, except at the cost of a great deal of time and energy, the person who wishes to obey the injunction to "buy British" in factory-produced domestic wares must be prepared to sacrifice his taste in doing so. He can easily get something that is technically sound, but—except for such honourable exceptions as the Wedgwood "honey buff" ware—his artistic preferences would be better pleased by something from Sweden, Germany, or Czechoslovakia.

From an industrial point of view, then, this exhibition has a certain importance, and manufacturers in particular may be urged to see it. Not so much for direct imitation as in order to see what an increasing number of people like in pottery and to set their wits to work to produce something of the same sort according to factory conditions. The glazes of the Leach wares are in a sober range of colours—olive, buff, russet, grey, and celadon—with surfaces ranging from "matt" to "flash," according to the conditions of firing, and a good many of the pieces have discreet incised, slip or brush decoration. A few simple tiles are included, and for the benefit of architects it may be said that they are made in standard sizes, 2×2, 2×4, 4×4, 6×6, and 9×9. One panel of larger tiles, intended for setting into the wall, is decorated with a design of a Cornish mine, and others have simple flower, fish, and animal motives.

1399

M B. Leach

From — THE —

GENERAL PRESS CUTTING ASSOCIATION, LTD.

13, FARRINGDON AVENUE, E.C.4.

TELEPHONE - - - CENTRAL 2684

Cutting from the Western Morning News Plymouth

Issue dated 10/11/31

Pottery for Use and Ornament.

At the Little Gallery in Ellis-street Mr. BERNARD LEACH, the master potter, whose kiln is at St. Ives, has one of his very pleasant exhibitions of stoneware pottery and tiles. It is profitable and interesting to contrast it with the work of that other master potter of our day, Mr. STAITE MURRAY, which is also being exhibited now at the Lefevre Galleries in King-street.

The aims of the two artists are distinct in that Mr. MURRAY is producing pots which are each of them individual, so much so that high prices must rule for individual excellency, while Mr. LEACH is striving to give the public pottery of excellent quality at the lowest possible price.

Laudable Aims.

Individuality in Mr. LEACH must to some extent be sacrificed, but the sacrifice is worth while and most laudable. Yet Mr. MURRAY'S aim is excellent and equally laudable, and equally an example of the highest value to commercial potteries. His designs are many of them exquisite in grace and proportion, though the ornament on his pots is unequal in quality. At his best he is superb. A this worst he is good, and the measure of his ability can very well be seen in the collections of tiny tea bowls which are as exquisitely made as the most expensive pieces in the exhibition.

Mr. LEACH'S colours are less varied, as they must be for his purpose, and his pots are more strictly utilitarian, but this exhibition shows again that he is one of the best artists at work west of the Tamar.

Slipware Pottery

FOLLOWING THE ENGLISH TRADITION

THE dishes, cider jars and garden pots here illustrated were made at Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, at an old pottery which was found lying derelict, and re-started by me in 1926. Here I have been working with two chief objects in view—first, to continue (and, if possible, enlarge) the slipware tradition in English pottery; secondly, to bring "pottery as pure art" into living relation with the needs of everyday life.

The slipware tradition is the country tradition of England—pottery made of local iron-bearing clays, and decorated with slip—that is, with a white clay used in a liquid or creamy consistency, contrasting with the brown colour of the body, or clay of which the pot is made.

This technique is used in various ways. The pot may be dipped in white slip, and then combed with a wooden tool while the slip is still wet; or decorated with sgraffito drawing when it is half dry; or the pattern may be painted with a brush on the surface of the pot, or applied with a tool called a slip trailer (something like the appliance used for decorating iced cakes). This produces a slightly raised pattern in white, and is the method which was mostly used by the old slipware potters of Staffordshire.

These illustrations show, above, a jar for draught cider, with a yellow pattern on a very dark brown body; the small sauce-boat in front being red-glazed outside with a yellow interior combed in red. On the left is a large garden pot and another jar—the garden pot being glazed outside, with an incised pattern drawn on the glaze while still wet.

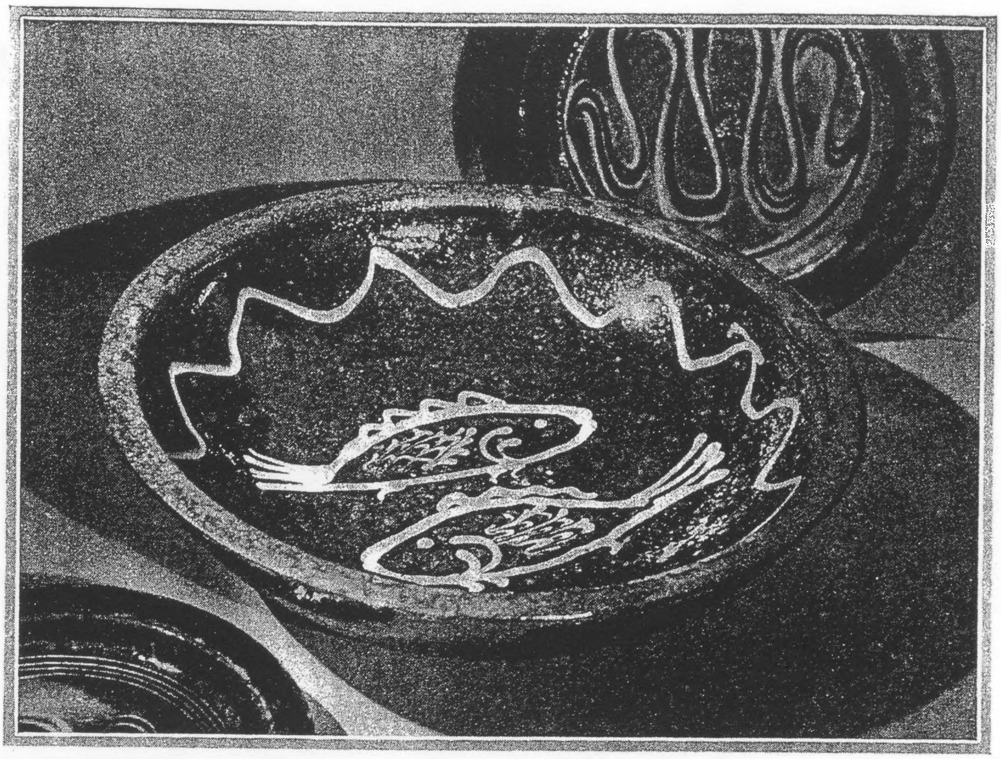
The pots are then dipped in galena glaze and burned in an open kiln fired with wood; that is to say, the wood flame actually plays on the surface of the pots, and produces the variety of colour which is characteristic of slipware.

Colours.

The range of colour is from pale yellow through all kinds of browns and subdued greens to a black which is more or less

brownish or greenish, according to the varying atmosphere of the kiln. These are all *iron* colours, produced by the action of wood flame on the natural oxides in the local clay. The oxides of copper and manganese can also be used occasionally with good effect. But, generally speaking, iron provides what may be called the "backbone" of the colour in slipware.

This apparent limitation in range has its æsthetic justification. A potter's processes should be as far as possible in imitation of natural processes, not of the unnaturally *pure* procedure of the experimental chemist. A potter's materials should be as near their natural state as is compatible with his art, and not the artificial products of the laboratory. "Art imitates Nature by working as she works."



A DISH IN BROWN SLIPWARE POTTERY WITH FISH DECORATION IN WHITE.

The Old Potters and their Local Characteristics.

The old country potters used the slipware technique in various ways, according to their local tradition. Each part of the country had its characteristic style. Staffordshire and Derbyshire excelled in large decorative dishes and posset-pots, etc.; Devon and Somerset and South Wales were famous for their harvest jugs, decorated copiously with sgraffito patterns and appropriate rhymes. The Western Midlands produced, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, very beautiful black dishes with trailed slip decoration, and black glazed jars. The latter are sometimes provided with a hole for a jar-tap, and evidently were intended as cider or beer jars.

Slipware in the past was always at its happiest in pots on a rather large scale. It was a desire to produce large pots suitable for modern use that first led me, about 1928, to make cider jars and garden pots. The idea of the cider jars is to provide a receptacle for draught cider. They are fitted with a cork and jar-tap, so that when once filled they can remain on the table or sideboard until they need refilling. They vary in size from 1½ to 4 gallons.

The garden pots are essentially the same in purpose as large ordinary flower-pots, unglazed inside, and with holes for ventilation in the bottom. In shape, however, they depart from the unbending rigidity of the ordinary flower-pot, and they are decorated with incised patterns, drawn on the surface of the glaze itself while still damp. This is really a Chinese Sung technique adapted to slipware glaze. It lends itself to a broad and free treatment, and has the advantage of being weather- and frost-proof.

These pots are perhaps specially suitable for roof gardens, and small gardens in towns. They can also be used indoors, standing on an impervious dish or tray, thus dispensing with the necessity for the Victorian "cache-pôt."

MICHAEL CARDEW.

MODERNISM IN AN OLD HOUSE

Rooms of To-Day in a Setting of Yesterday

UP the narrow stairs of a narrow eighteenth-century house in St. Leonard's Terrace, Chelsea, you come into a quietly sophisticated silver room, and if it is summer, and you are English, you immediately go to the tall windows and look at the game of cricket being played on the green strip below, forgetting the room itself and only aware of the mother-o'-pearl sky above the trees and the Guardsmen that play the national game. If it is winter, you have probably met a bitter wind as you turned the corner, and are only too glad to sink into the deep lime-coloured leather chair by the fire, sip a cocktail behind the drawn curtains, and enjoy your surroundings.

It is a restful room because it is a finished room. Here is nothing amateurish or haphazard in workmanship. I wondered if this feeling of finish were due to the Regency fire-basket (which, unfortunately, you cannot see in the photograph reproduced on page 553) glowing with live coals and wood, or to the perfection of Chinese painting over the mantelpiece, and the Chinese pottery in the niches. But I think even they would not overcome the irritation of shoddy work. Therefore full due must be given to Mr. Brian O'Rorke, the architect who has remodelled the house with care and quietness.

The plaster cable moulding that marks the junction of walls and ceiling, and the contour of shaped woodwork above the niches that enshrine the pair of Chinese figures, are very neat, and are details that make all the difference were one to live in this house. It is small things like this we are apt to be slack about, and unless the designer will himself bother and fuss, they will be indifferently carried out, and the effect will be worse than bad.

The ceilings are not obviously coloured. One asks oneself of what tone they really are. In the half-light, they seem to be oyster, in daylight a pale green gold, in

ARMISTICE DAY PLANS

EX-SERVICE MEN AT THE CENOTAPH

As in former years the British Legion have been asked to make the arrangements for the ex-Service contingent attending the national service at the Cenotaph on Armistice Day, Friday next.

The assembly will be at 9.30 a.m. at Wellington Barracks, where admission will be by ticket only. Tickets have already been issued to ex-Service men units. The contingent will be commanded by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Charles Madden, and the Chief Parade Marshal will be Colonel E. C. Heath, General Secretary, British Legion. The parade will be divided into five columns. The route will be Birdcage Walk, Horse Guards Arch and Whitehall to the Cenotaph.

The Duke and Duchess of York will be present at the Royal Albert Hall on November 11 (Armistice Night) for the annual British Legion Festival of Remembrance. The doors will be open at 7.15, and ticket holders are asked to be in their seats by 7.50. No tickets will be on sale. Tickets have already been issued to men who served oversea in the War, and boxes have been allotted to donors to the Festival Fund. In the course of the evening 1,104,890 poppy petals will fall on the assembly—one petal for each of the Empire's dead.

A short Armistice Day service will be held in St. Paul's Cathedral at 10.45 a.m. Immediately after the Silence the Last Post will be sounded from the West Front of the Cathedral, where the choir will sing "O God, our help in ages past" and the National Anthem.

At Westminster Cathedral a Solemn Requiem will be held at 11.5 a.m. on Armistice Day. The Cardinal Archbishop will be present and will give the Absolution afterwards.

The City of London Territorial Association will hold a short military service on Armistice Day at the London Troops' Memorial in front of the Royal Exchange. Loudspeakers will be installed. Ticket holders will be admitted to the Royal Exchange by the north door—in Threadneedle Street—up to 10.45 a.m.

An appeal was broadcast from London yesterday by Major J. B. Brunel Cohen, honorary treasurer, British Legion, in place of General Sir Frederick Maurice, president of the Legion, who is too ill to undertake any public engagements. Major Cohen, who lost both legs in the War as the result of machine-gun fire when in the trenches in the Ypres sector, said Remembrance Day was our yearly recognition of an obligation we took upon ourselves at the time of the War, the one real opportunity we had, to pay a little of that debt of honour which, in our time, we could not hope to pay in full. Remembrance was expressed each Armistice Day in the simple but now world-wide act of wearing a poppy in our coats. He asked all to be most generous on Poppy Day. Ex-Service men and their dependents looked with anxious eyes to the British Legion for help, and the Legion looked to the public's help on Poppy Day to see that its valuable work went on.

An important branch of the British Legion's work depending largely on the annual Remembrance Day appeal for the Earl Haig Fund is the rehabilitation scheme for disabled ex-Service men at Preston Hall, Aylesford, Kent. The facilities offered to disabled ex-Service men at Preston Hall range from sanatorium treatment on up-to-date lines to the provision of houses for a large number of the patients and their families. Seven years ago there were only 115 patients in the sanatorium; now there are, on an average, 230. Social, recreational, and educational needs are met by a village hall, school, institute, and child-welfare centre. During the past six years the industries have sold over £300,000 worth of goods, not only in this country but abroad, and new markets have been opened up in many parts of the Empire.

EXPIATION AND ATONEMENT

MESSAGE OF THE DEAD

Major-General Sir Fabian Ware, in a broadcast address yesterday dealing with the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission, said that one of our elder statesmen wrote to him the other day, after a visit to France, that the graveyards seemed to be the only permanent result which the War had achieved. If this were so, it was a natural outcome of the simple realization by our generation, an instinctive realization, true amid all the false and illusive hopes in the hour of victory, that the greatest fact of the War was the sacrifice of these men. That the record of them should be made imperishable was the least honour which could be paid to them, for by them had been borne the expiation of the shortcomings of previous generations: they had made atonement for the failure of the world's statesmen to achieve their political ends by other means than war.

As the years had passed, the message had become more and more definite and insistent, a clear note in all the confusion and babble of contemporary opinion—perhaps, indeed, the one clear note that sounded above the chaos of post-War thought and pessimism. That message was one of expiation and atonement for the past, so that, as the Prince of Wales reminded them at Thiepval, these permanent records were no mere Book of the Dead—they were the opening of a new Book of Life. For it was not only the people of the British Empire and their former Allies who remembered the dead: our former enemies were also listening to the same message from theirs.

Now they had the answer to the question: "Is there no firm ground on which you can steady your feet?" At this time of remembrance of the Great War, those to whom personally that War was no more than a dark shadow, deepening as the background of history receded, they in this season could find a foothold, in spite of the welter of things material and spiritual. Brave men were still brave men and would act again as they did in 1914 if called on by their statesmen to do so; but let them stand firmly by these Dead. Let their voice be heard, the voice of all of them, friend and foe of the Great War. Let them see to it that the statesmen of the British Empire heard their message, and let them do all in their power to make sure that it was heard also by the statesmen of France and of Germany, of all our late Allies, and of all our late enemies. For these millions of Dead—theirs and ours—spoke with one voice; they said to the statesmen of the world: "You failed to achieve your ends by other means than war, and we have expiated your failure—fail not again. Accept our atonement and give new faith and life to the world."

CELEBRATIONS IN DUBLIN

FOREIGN DIPLOMATISTS AT OFFICIAL SERVICE

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

DUBLIN, Nov. 6

To-day was celebrated as Remembrance Day in Dublin and services were held in most of the Protestant churches. High Mass was sung in the Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough Street, and was attended by large numbers of Roman Catholic ex-Service men, who marched in procession through the streets.

An official remembrance service was held this afternoon in St. Patrick's Cathedral. Thousands of ex-Service men marched from St. Stephen's Green to the Cathedral, which was packed to the doors. The French Minister and most of the other foreign representatives in Dublin were present, and the service was most impressive. The preacher was the Right Rev. Dr. Macaulay, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and one of the clergymen who took part in the service was the Rev. R. H. Foster, D.C.M., Methodist minister of Bray, County Wicklow.

A body which calls itself the League Against Imperialism proposes to hold a public meeting on Thursday in College Green as a protest against the celebration of Armistice Day. The British Legion and other organizations of ex-Service men have made their usual arrangements for the annual observance.

2ND CITY OF LONDON REGIMENT

The 2nd City of London Regiment (The Royal Fusiliers) attended church parade at St. Mary's Church, Balham, yesterday, and afterwards proceeded to their headquarters at 213, Balham High Road. Before a large assembly the regimental War memorial was unveiled by Major-General W. J. Dugan, commanding 56th (1st London) Division. The memorial commemorates 1,345 officers and men who laid down their

ART EXHIBITIONS

LEFEVRE GALLERIES

With new pottery, paintings, and sculpture, by Mr. Staite Murray, and needlework panels, by Miss Marjorie Craigie from designs by Mr. Michael Sevier, the Lefevre Galleries, 1A, King Street, St. James's, may be said to put the emphasis upon domestic decoration. That Mr. Murray should paint and model—his "Head in Terra Cotta," with light-curled hair, has a pleasing Anglo-Saxon character and is excellent in colour—is all to the good because, in his enthusiasm for form and colour in the abstract, he has lately been in some danger of forgetting that a pot is after all a pot. Not that the pot is limited to base utility, but that beyond a certain point its artistic aspirations are better absorbed in actual representation. For this reason—and possibly it is because he has released himself in painting and sculpture—we are glad to see Mr. Murray concentrating upon a definite form of pot, that of the "amphora." His aim, in this, appears to be a blending of Oriental ceramic quality with classical feeling.

"Aulis," with its banded glaze and discreet incised decoration round the shoulder, is perhaps his most successful piece, but "Waters of Babylon" and "Serenade," with their subtle variations of the form suggested by the titles, are lovely things also. "Song of Songs," the largest piece in the exhibition, strikes one as having its greatest width too nearly equidistant from top and bottom, though the spiral movement of the decoration helps to shoulder it up. Domestic wares, such as "Tea Bowls," are not neglected, and the smallest pieces are beautiful in technical quality. The paintings, in a wax medium, though pictorial, put the emphasis upon the abstract appeal of line, colour, and movement. "The Three Sisters"—trees in a townscape—is a particularly happy example.

The needlework panels, by Miss Craigie and Mr. Sevier, represent an intelligent domestication of Cubism—which always appears rather at a loose end when it has only a pictorial function, and gains enormously in decorative effect by the texture of the stitch. In art, indeed, there does not seem to be any satisfactory middle state between representation and application. Speaking generally the designs are most pleasing when, as in "Composition" (5), variety of tone is combined with unity of colour, or, as in "Fish" (10) and "Still Life" (13), there is the reverse combination of variety of colour with unity of tone. This might almost be exalted into a rule in work of the kind. Some of the panels are adapted to firescreens and the seating of chairs, with very good effect.

CHINESE POTTERY

The present exhibition of Chinese pottery, porcelain, jade, and a few excavated pieces from Thanhoa at the galleries of Mr. John Sparks, 128, Mount Street, is distinctly miscellaneous, ranging in time from 1122 B.C. to the eighteenth century A.D. One of the most striking objects is a "Square Stone Stele," of the late Han period. This is one of the Chinese works, occasionally encountered, with a tantalizing affinity with Pacific art—the human head at the top carrying the mind to Easter Island. Artistically the work is interesting for the use made by the carver of "bosses"—formed by the protruding eyes, wrists, and knees of the figure. The shaft is finely carved with a conventional design. The Indo-Chinese pottery and porcelain excavated at Thanhoa, attributed to the fourteenth century or earlier, shows a mingling of Chinese and Indian characteristics. "Shallow pottery bowl" (44), decorated with fish in brown on a cream ground, is very vigorous in design.

Is it not then reasonable to conclude that we have in the Duveen picture and in the one in the Prado either companion portraits or replicas of companion portraits? To be sure, there is a slight difference in the size of the two canvases. That of Anne is a little higher and wider than that of Louis, 129 cm. by 106 cm., as compared with 119 cm. by 96 cm., but if we accept the record of the Teniers painting—the representation of the *Louis XIII* as it is shown on the walls of the Archduke's Gallery—the portrait of Louis has been cut down at the right and at the bottom.

We now have an opportunity to enjoy in the original, with its splendid harmonies of red, blue-grey, black, and gold, a portrait the beauty of which was only dimly suggested by the heavy treatment of Soutman and Louys when translated into black and white. In the Duveen *Louis XIII*, as in the *Anne of Austria* in the Prado, the face, ruff, and hand are brilliantly painted. The armour, if not actually by Rubens, must have been retouched by him. The draperies and other accessories are less interesting. ELLA S. SIPLE.

SHAH JAHAN'S DRINKING VESSEL.—Many of the descendants of Tīmūr loved wine and feasting; many fostered fine craftsmanship; yet only a few of their drinking vessels have come down to us. At the Persian Exhibition of 1931 a goblet was shown which formerly belonged to Husain Mirza, the celebrated fifteenth-century Timurid Sultan of Herat, and is now the property of M. Cartier (Exhibition No. 193, Z); and at South Kensington there is a jade drinking-cup bearing the name of another member of the family, the Mughal Emperor Jahāngīr.

The beautiful vessel here illustrated (presumably a drinking-cup [PLATE] is a fine example of the workmanship of the period of Jahāngīr's son and successor Shāh Jahān, the Emperor of the Tāj Mahal, who came to the throne in A.D. 1628. It was acquired recently by Mr. Oscar Raphael, and it is worth mentioning that the former owner was not aware of its historical interest as the Emperor's property. It is shaped like a bisected gourd, and the material is a very dark mottled green jade, cool and refreshing to look on. The base is in the form of foliage with overlapping leaves, shaped like a closed tulip, and resembling some of the contemporary floral designs, e.g., in the Tāj Mahal and the Agra Fort. The palmette ornament on the upper part of the cup is broadly treated.

The jade, Mr. Raphael thinks, is certainly Indian, as appears from its peculiar translucency. Probably the cup was made in India, and possibly a Chinese workman had a hand in its making.

The half of the Persian inscription (which is engraved on both sides in a fine *nasta'līq* script, enclosed in cartouches) here shown runs as follows: *Shāh Jahān Sānī Sāhib Qirān,* i.e., "Shāh Jahān, Second Lord of the Conjunctions." The astrological title, "Second Lord of the Conjunctions," was an addition—also commonly found on this Emperor's coins—made by Shāh Jahān to the titles used by his predecessors, the Emperors Akbar and Jahāngīr. The first "Lord of the Conjunctions" was Tīmūr, of their descent from whom the Mughal Emperors were exceedingly proud.

The dates 1057 and 21 are written beneath, the Hijri year 1057 (= A.D. 1647) being the twenty-first year of Shāh Jahān's reign. J. V. S. WILKINSON.

OLD CHINESE POTTERY AND PORCELAIN AT BLUETT'S.—The exhibition of early Chinese pottery held at Messrs. Bluett and Sons, Davies Street, W., during March, was confined almost entirely to pieces with the single-coloured glazes made in such perfection under the Sung and succeeding Yüan Dynasties. The celadons were particularly good and a mallet-shaped vase shown was precisely similar in its luminous blue-green glaze, of dense smooth texture, to the type-piece of this "Kinuta" class preserved in the Treasury at Nara in Japan. Some large dishes with dragons in relief, modestly catalogued as "Sung or Yüan," might well have been given the benefit of the earlier date, on the showing of their beautiful glaze, which is of the compact Lung Ch'üan type rather than the more watery-looking sort characteristic of the later manufacture. Among the Tz'ŭ Chou wares a large jar [PLATE A] showed exceptionally fine drawing beautifully accented by incised details. The other Northern wares were equally well represented. But some Southern pieces were perhaps of greater historical importance. The flight of the Chinese Court to the South in 1127 marked the beginning of a new phase in Chinese ceramic art, eventually leading to the concentration of the manufacture at Ching-tê Chên in the province of Kiangsi, and it is now recognized that the "Southern Ting" made in this province was the precursor of the fine white porcelain so familiar in painted wares of Ming and later date. The dish here figured [PLATE B] is of this "Southern Ting" ware and bears one of the most sensitive and vital pieces of engraved decoration seen in London for a long time. The identification of other Ching-tê Chên primitives provides one of the most interesting ceramic problems, and a great advance has been made in recent years by the establishment of the early date of some blue-and-white. The dated vases in the Russell and Elphinstone Collections have shown that by the fourteenth century blue painting had definitely passed out of the experimental stage. It now seems that other types can be dated back much farther than seemed possible at first. An altar set of three pieces at Messrs. Bluett's showed unmistakable resemblance in form to the early blue-and-white, and was reputed to have come from a Sung tomb; but their low-fired green, yellow and brown glaze-decoration is of a type not hitherto believed to be so early.

THE JUBILEE RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION OF THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY.—The aim of this Exhibition is not only to commemorate the completion of half a century of systematic collecting on the part of the Gallery, although the actual inauguration of the Art Gallery idea goes back as far as 1864, but also to illustrate the range and variety of the objects brought together during this period. Dur-

What Next in Art?

by CLIVE BELL

The trend of art, and especially of painting, is at the present time a matter of doubt and dispute. This is the first of a number of articles in which famous artists and critics will examine the question from various aspects — though not necessarily expressing the opinions of "The Studio." The views of readers on the problems raised would be welcome.—EDITOR.

THE END OF AN EPOCH

The first movement of the twentieth century, the movement sometimes called "Abstract," at one moment "Cubist," and best fitted, I think, with that colourless, comprehensive and purely chronological label, "post-Impressionist," has, unless I mistake, run its course. It is complete. Having produced its share of first-rate art, having served a useful disciplinary purpose, having enjoyed a life of more than five-and-twenty years and survived a great war, it has made its mark and departed. It died of the disease of which all movements die, it lost its power of stimulating the young. The masters of the movement, most of whom are still in full vigour of creation — Matisse, Picasso and the rest—have developed personal styles in which no doubt they will continue to work, little or not at all affected by the theory and practice of a new generation, just as the great survivors of Impressionism—Renoir, Degas, Monet — and their legitimate descendants — Bonnard and Vuillard—continued, and continue, to create in their own way, not much concerned with the enthusiasms and pre-occupations of their juniors. But the future, I surmise, is not with imitators, any more than in 1904—when first I went to Paris—it was with the Henri Martins and Besnards who were then making something popular and profitable out of the decay of Impressionism. The first act in the history of twentieth-century painting is over.

Let us consider for a moment how it will look to the historian. Post-Impressionism derives of course from Cézanne, but of course the influence of Cézanne does not end with post-Impressionism: Cézanne being one of those painters who, like Giotto or Rubens, may continue to influence painting for generations. Its characteristic manifestation, though not perhaps its greatest artist, is Picasso. Like most healthy movements, it was a reaction against the past. From 1830 to 1900, roughly, very roughly, artists had in theory attached more importance to content than to form. In theory, I say, because, for one thing, it is doubtful whether in practice content and form can be separated,

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Earthenware jug, an ancestor in the English pot found in London excavations. It is of the fourtee and its red clay body has a cream coloured gla with green. (Lent by the London Museum for th of English Pottery—Past and Present at the V Albert Museum)

GEOFFREY GRIG

in search of ENGLI

IS there a type of English pottery? An "Englishness"? A "living tradition"? Abstractions like these are very convenient, but very hard to define. There is an English race, there is an English country with certain materials ready for use, there is an English climate, there are English domestic habits and needs, there are English ways of thought, Engligh checks and influences on feeling and behaviour, just as much as there is an English language. Such English peculiarities have evolved, shall we say, a type of English church, a type of English village, a type of English poem, a type of English attitude towards life and death. But they have not done the work by themselves; they have only evolved these things by acting, or making a compromise, with what is common to all Europeans in their religious, emotional and social behaviour, and common to all human beings in the fact that they are human. If there is (as I believe there is) an "Englishness" in our pottery, it would be a bad thing unless it were fairly elusive. If it were too obvious, down would smash the balance between the universal and the particular that every culture depends upon: the potter would be concerned to make an English pot, not a good pot; and "Make British" would be as ridiculous a sign of value as any other patriotic slogan.

The Victoria and Albert Museum and the Council for Art and Industry tried to get at the "English spirit" in pottery by arranging a summer exhibition running from medieval pitchers to twentieth-century teacups. Certainly it did show a consistent individuality. There was something common to a great many exhibits different in age, locality and materia It would be simple enough to call it a qualit of graceful earnestness, solidity and plainnes the quality which should belong to earthe ware and stoneware, the quality which com from preserving the mean between the natu of the clay, the purpose for which the pot being made and its good appearance. Th tripartite quality does not just occur, it is cultural and traditional quality. Earthenwa or stoneware clays are not naturally throw into good shapes. Remove the cultural, tra ditional, utilitarian or æsthetic checks and an psychopathic peculiarities in the potter ca produce things as monstrous in clay as in an other material. But there are forms which a right for such clays, and these forms are als right for the "Englishness" in the Englis potter. "English pottery has always bee distinguished by the devotion of its makers t utility as the prime reason for the existenc of their wares." That strikes me as an ove statement, if it is not a wrong statement. Th potter's motives cannot be so simply cat gorised; and I think it has pleased the Englis potter to build up on his wheel shapes whic are graceful and robust in a naturalist manner. What is typically English in potter seems to me never out of touch with th roundness and solidity of natural forms, th human breast or thigh, the tree trunk, th boulder, the flint block, if you like, the turni The English potter has abstracted these form only to a certain degree, a degree which can b called romantic, instead of classical. Hi forms are more human or natural than th exquisite severities of Chinese porcelain.

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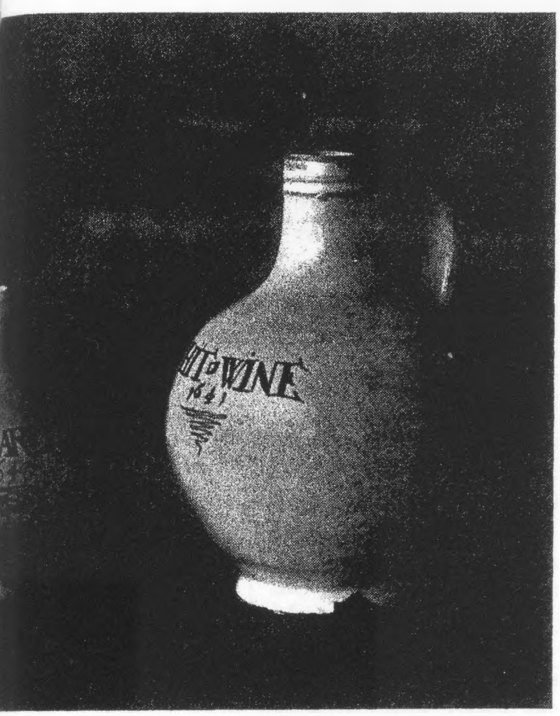
TTERY



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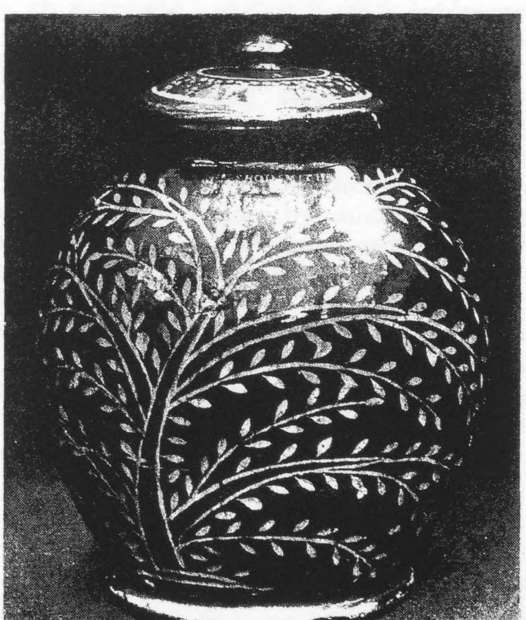


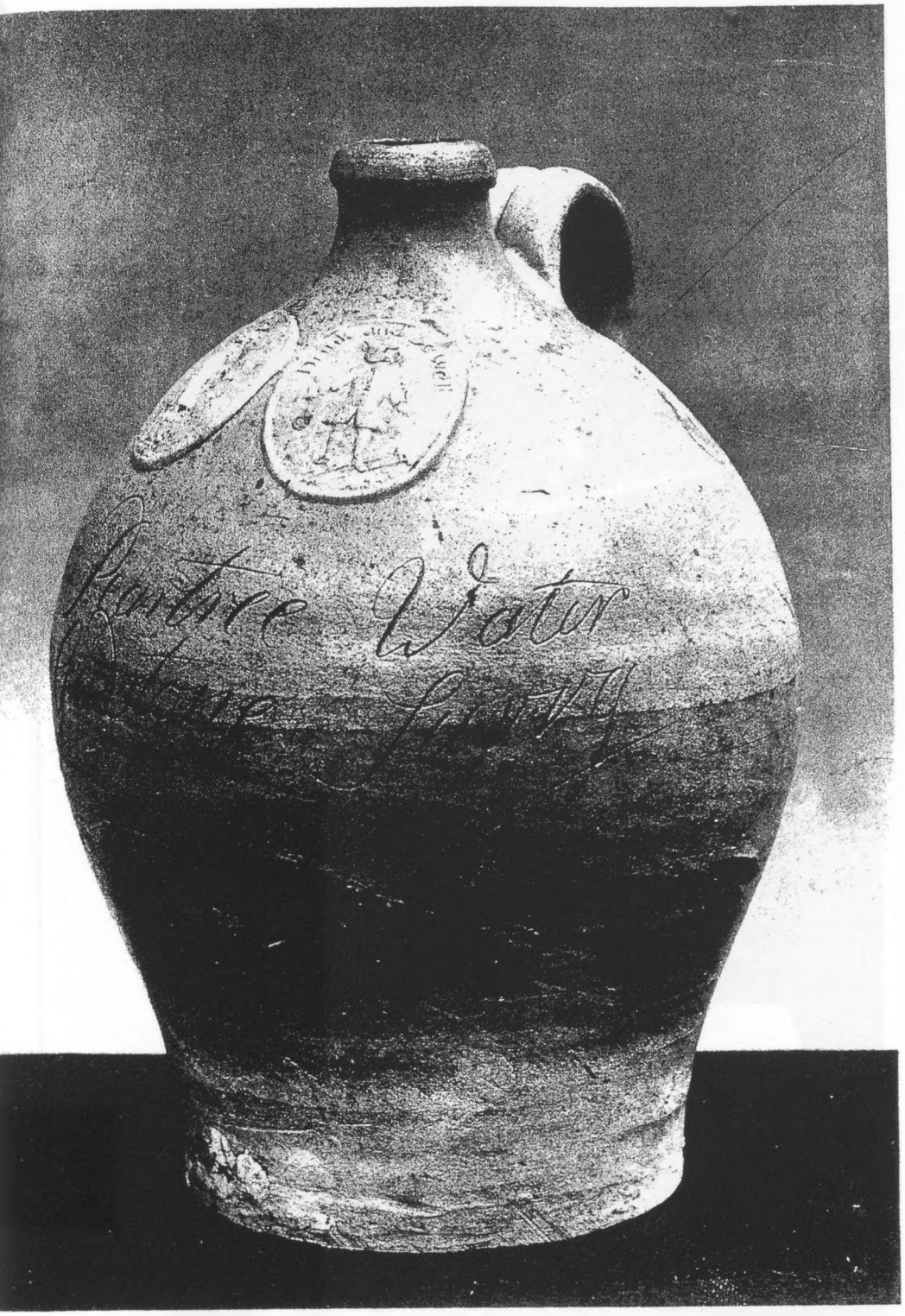
POTTERY — PAST AND PRESENT
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

e jar made by MICHAEL CARDEW at Winchcombe, e and lent to the exhibition by Henry Bergen, Esq. n-century (Lambeth) enamelled earthenware wine white ground and blue lettering. (Schreiber Col- oneware vase designed by VERA HUGGINS and made Co. Ltd. The colours are brown and yellow. 4. Early tury earthenware jar (Bethersden, Kent) given by g

English medieval pottery exemplifies this at once. It has a quality of sculpture. Which is why it deserves noting; one of the collectors of it is the sculptor, Mr. Henry Moore. The belated recognition of the æsthetic merit of English medieval pottery is one of the things for which we have to thank Mr. Bernard Rackham and Mr. Herbert Read. Its tall, tree-like pitchers or solid jugs are very aptly and boldly and simply formed. They have a natural congruity of purpose and shape; and it is always worth noticing how admirably and unobtrusively the handles of these pots belong to their design. On nine out of ten jugs by the modern studio potter, on all the modern earthenware pitchers the handles stick out like incongruous afterthoughts, instead of growing naturally from the curves of each pot and adding a new element to their relationship. The tradition of the medieval potter certainly flowed down through the centuries at South Kensington. Refined but not refined away to weakness and not fundamentally changed by foreign influence, it is certainly there in the enamelled earthenware wine bottles, made in the seventeenth century at Lambeth, in the swelling, noble stoneware jug made a hundred years later at Fulham, and in the Kentish earthenware jar of 1809. It was not so easy to find in the modern exhibits. It seemed to me that the decorative earthenware and stoneware was nearly all of it bad. The forms were no longer lively and "natural," the surfaces were slick, the decorations were not obedient, as they must be, to the predominant rhythms of the bowl or jar itself (notice how the Lambeth wine-bottle inscriptions are related to the tallness, but mainly to the breadth of each jar). This was true just as much of the work of the studio potters. Mr. Staite Murray, for example, goes as near as anyone could go to making an art out of pastiche, but his "Chinese" stoneware is neither Chinese nor English, and when he starts to decorate his wares, the consequence is often an alarming misfit. Compare the congruity of decoration and form on the Kentish jar, the trunk emphasising the height, the branches the varying width and main curves of the jar, with the incongruity which spoils the Staite Murray bowl lent by Mr. George Eumorfopoulos. Another studio potter, Mr. Michael Cardew, works in the English tradition without seeming to understand it. Set his stone jar against the Fulham jug or fourteenth-century jug, and everything he lacks is obvious; and had decoration ever less to do with form?

But the tradition does continue; it continues just precisely where "art" does not consciously interfere. The best modern exhibits were for commercial use. Where the art or decorative pottery of the famous firms had lost its "Englishness," their commercial pottery had kept it. Far the finest modern jug in the exhibition for form, colour and quality of surface was a stoneware acid jug, made by Messrs. Doulton. It could, and did, stand very well alongside a table of medieval ware. The best modern analogues for the medieval earthenware or the Siamese stoneware bowl of the tenth century, the T'ang earthenware jar, the Chinese stoneware bowls of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries or the Japanese firepot which were included for comparative purposes in the exhibition, were not pots by Mr. Staite Murray, Mr. Bernard Leach, Miss Pleydell-Bouverie or Mr. Michael Cardew or artist-designed wares made by the big potteries, but the Doulton fire-clay crucibles, the stoneware ginger-beer bottles, the mercury-bottle and bung-jar shown by Messrs. Joseph Bourne. The craftsman left to himself, his purpose and his materials, had done excellently; and the virtues of a ginger beer bottle exhibited all the damage due to having now made the craftsman into a machine for carrying out the designs of an artist who has not been thoroughly and practically trained in pottery technique.

One could see the same thing exactly at South Kensington if one examined the porcelain and the table wares. From the Staffordshire salt-glazed wares of the eighteenth century, the Bristol and Lambeth blue and white earthenware, the Wedgwood cream-coloured earthenware and the early porcelain, there has been a formal decline which has not really been checked. Good earthenware for the table, and good porcelain were on view, but they were not good enough. They were too much like the worst products of the eighteen-nineties with the ornament wiped off, and once again the present-day analogues for the earlier English tablewares, for the Corean or Chinese porcelains, were not the Wedgwood grey tea service in porcelain, or the plain white and steel dinner service designed for the Worcester Royal Porcelain Company by Mr. J. W. Wadsworth, but the Worcester Royal and Doulton laboratory porcelain, made once more by uninterrupted factory craftsmanship. Porcelain beakers, crucibles, evaporating and crystalizing dishes, lymph receivers, digesters—here in these commercial, unpretentious products were the seemliness of the Wedgwood sauce-boat and cruet and the "functional" elegance of an aeroplane or a house by Corbusier. Porcelain may not be the ideal



magnificent stoneware jug of Fulham make. It bears the inscription " Drink and be well. Iron eartree water, Nr. Godstone, Surrey," and is of the first half of the eighteenth century. (Given to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Major W. G. Dugdale)

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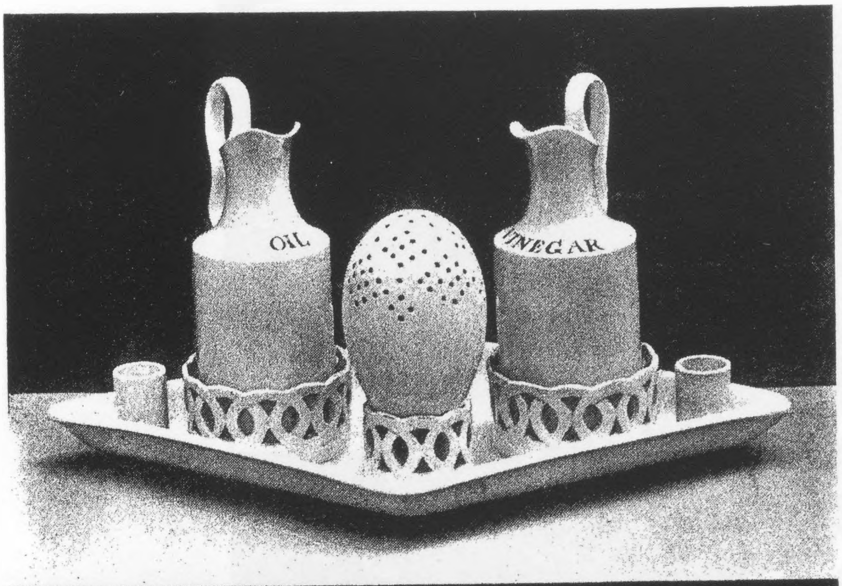

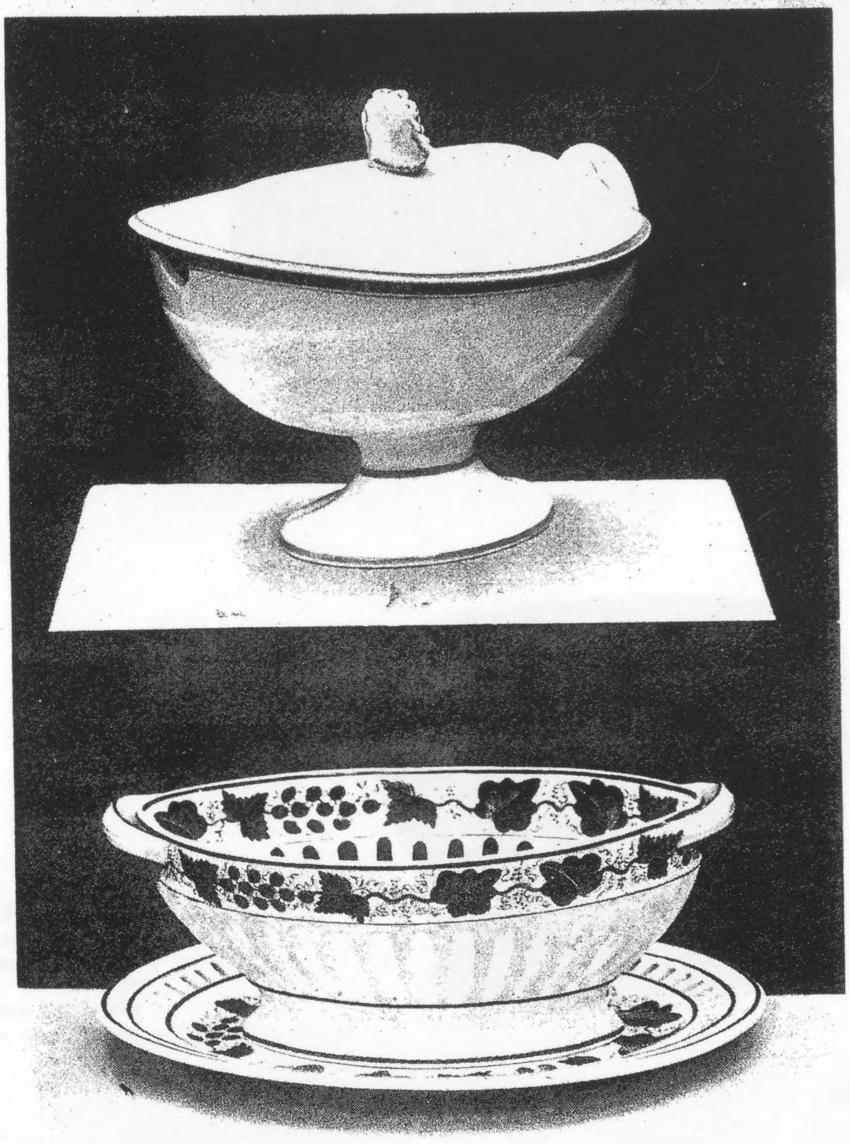

1. Cruet in cream coloured ware wit lettering. Eighteenth-century Wed Etruria factory. (Mrs. A. Cameron B 2. Also Wedgwood eighteenth-centur coloured earthenware sauce-boat. factory. 3. Early nineteenth-century basket and stand. Cream coloured e ware with design in olive green. I C. B. Farmer, Esq.

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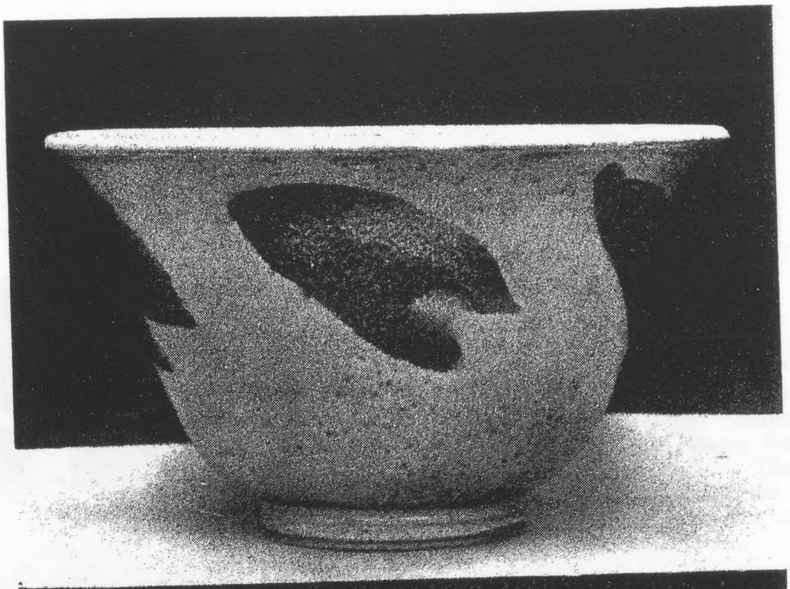

owl designed by RECO CAPEY oulton & Co. Ltd., Lambeth. owl by NORAH BRADEN ; lent en, Esq. 3. Stoneware bowl MURRAY. Lent by George , Esq. These three bowls are y work and show an Oriental ign

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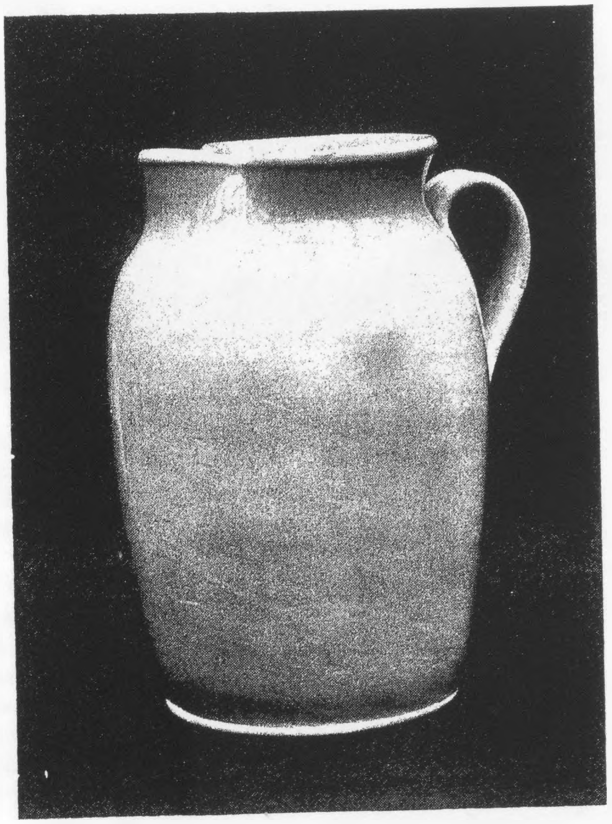
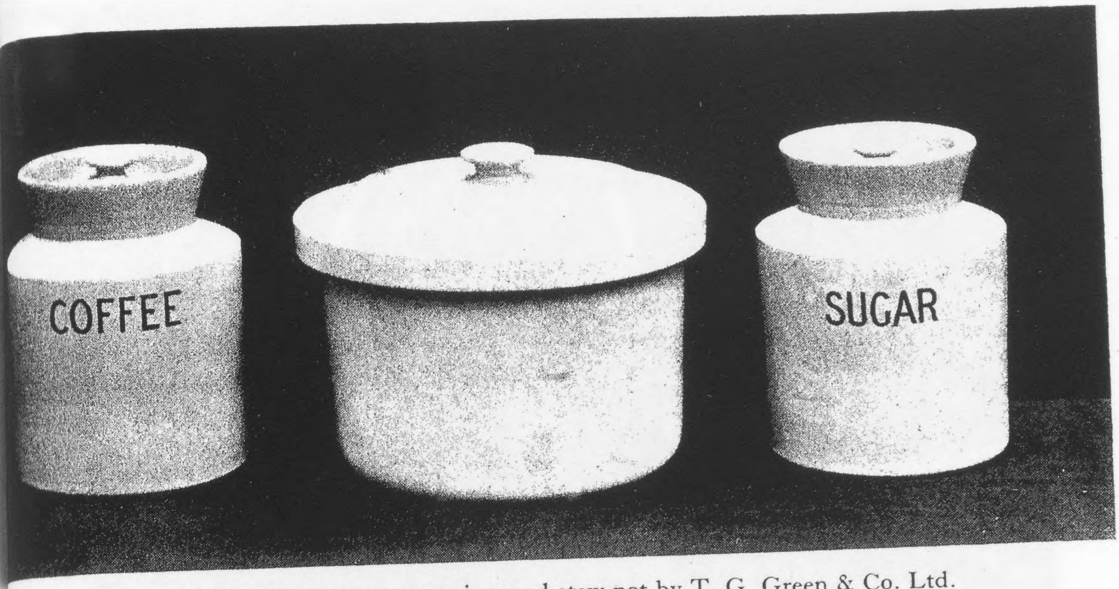


PRESENT-DAY POTTERY

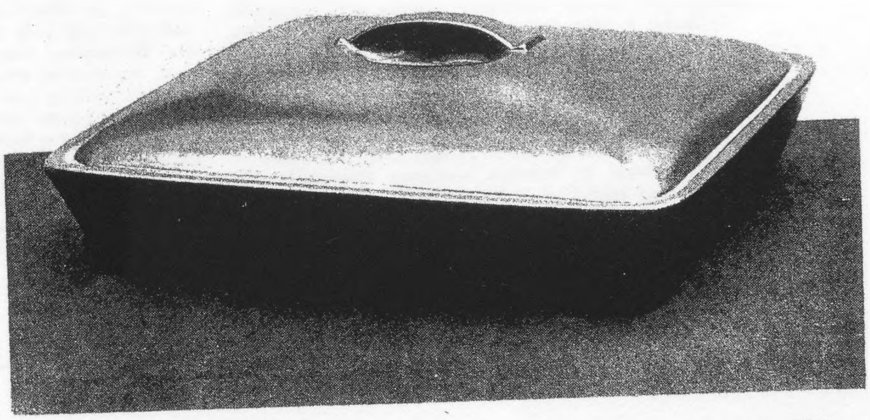
Left : Stoneware acid jug by Doulton & Co. Ltd., Lambeth. Pale stone in colour. Below : Ginger beer bottle and stoneware jug by Joseph Bourne & Son. Crucible by Doulton of Lambeth. The two pieces of laboratory porcelain at the left of the bottom photograph are by Doulton of Lambeth. The other crucible is by the Royal Worcester Porcelain Co.



Honey-coloured earthenware store jars and stew pot by T. G. Green & Co. Ltd.

sh material, but they were all excellent ically and in design. Even the trade- fitted them as well as the words " oil " vinegar " were fitted to the eighteenth- ry cruet bottles. The truth is that a y of "Englishness," a quality of seemliness itality and solid grace, is just as possible ass-production pottery as it ever was in ore-or-less individual handicraft pottery. radition is still there in the factory, alive gh to be strengthened and extended ; but hall never get good pottery by asking l Academicians to put circus-horses into middle of plates. The lesson of the oria and Albert exhibition was once more the whole relationship between art and stry must be changed. It must be changed in the way which Professor Gropius has described in *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*. Knowledge of material and production and design has to be made into one knowledge ; and industry must give up distrusting the formal principles of modern art. When industry is prepared to train for itself " a body of men of wide general culture as thoroughly versed in the practical and mechanical sides of design as in its theoretical and formal laws," all, or more, English pottery will be as good as the Doulton crystallising dish, the acid jug and the ginger beer bottle. The studio-potter and the companionate marriage of easel-artist and craftsman are never going to get us very far.

G.G.



n stoneware fire- breakfast dish by h Bourne & Son

CORRESPONDENCE

BERNARD LEACH. Slipware tea set. (See letter below)

...r's Reply to Geoffrey Grigson on English Pottery

...Editor of THE STUDIO.

...r Sir,—Mr. Grigson's article in the November ... of THE STUDIO is the most interesting and ...ng that I have read for some time. There is a ...rable measure of truth in his contention that ... and a greater measure of hope lie with "journey-...tter," and his unalloyed tradition, than in the pot ...s sake methods of the studio potter, or of the trade ...man's ideas of our industry.

...at Mr. Grigson does not tell us is how he conceives ...e innate tradition of Englishness in pots is going to ...rated on any scale once again. I would go further ...k him by what steps he thinks this bright new world ...s is likely to get household utensils which will ...leasure both to body and mind comparable to that ...y his own illustrated examples.

...own long and close observation in the Far East ...home has convinced me that unless the unconscious ... of tradition is encouraged by the instinctive and ...us leadership of the creative artist's faculty once ... touch with life, we can only hope to arrive at the ...mfort of the marriage of the intellect to the factory. ...na and Japan, where modernisation is not solely ...r of old and new, but also of East and West, ... much clearer that unconscious tradition, however ... unequal to facing the artistic problems of indus-... We all know how the lovely heritage of cen-...of patient discovery is thrown overboard in a ...nd the kindest thing one can say of the new pro-...s that they are undigested. Only once in a wilder-... we find signs of some rare mind grasping the two ...es of culture and mating them in an instant of ...e beauty and knowledge. The artist's problem ...w become the potter's problem—only genius ...it, whereas in old days simple innate race-genius ... work unknowingly. These two creative forces need to be brought to one focus. It is not enough to perceive that the makers of the Fulham acid jugs have a residue of race genius.

Another matter on which I could hazard a fall with Mr. Grigson is his bland statement that mass-production can, and is, giving us the English quality of seemliness, vitality and solid grace, just as well as hand methods ever did in the past. It is astonishing that anyone should write as perceptively as he has and yet understand so little the relative capacities of hand and tool and machine. Yet this is a very common mistake of intellectuals to-day, and it comes about usually because modern life does not encourage us to use our hands to express "seemliness, vitality and solid grace." We can slip into an easy way of thinking the downright sensible qualities of Doulton's & Bourne's technical wares as æsthetic as those of old English or Chinese pots from a natural desire to take pride in any art born unostentatiously of our age.

The fact is, one cannot say more of these pots than that they are honest and sensible. They have not much sensitiveness, or quality, and cannot possibly be expected to have such, for these characteristics only come of personal control through human hands as in the so-called "fine arts." Let's recognise our "functionalism" as being incomplete, and our studio potter as being somewhat out of touch with the underlying needs of present life. But some of us are emerging either to work in groups or to collaborate with the newer directorate of industry.

BERNARD LEACH.

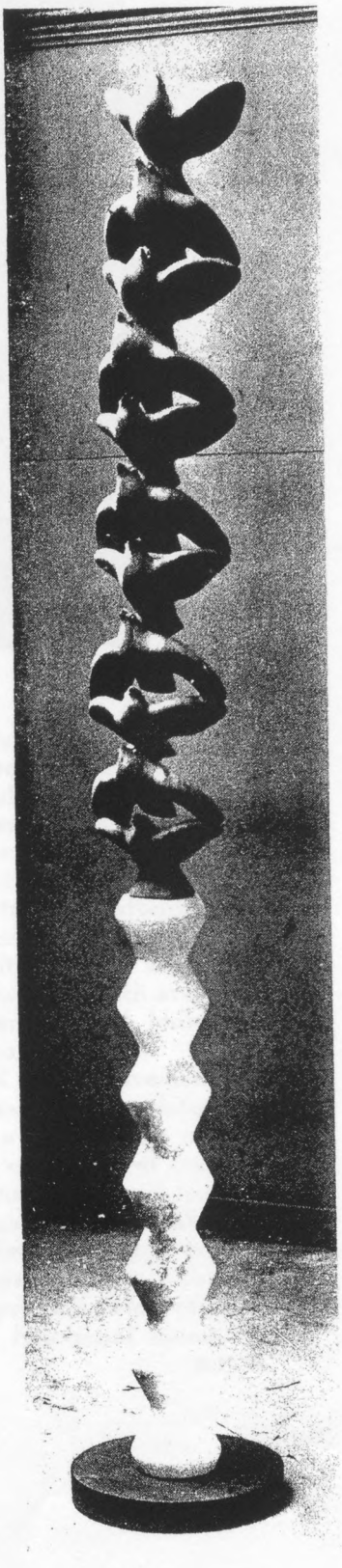
A Dual Protest

To the Editor of THE STUDIO.

Dear Sir,

This letter is to register a dual protest; firstly against the altogether excessive amount of space devoted to pottery, glass and decoration, in comparison with that devoted to painting, sculpture, furniture and drawing, in your pages.

The place of SCULPTUR
to-day and to-mor



MAURICE LAMBERT. Lark ascending. (Courtesy of the City Art Gallery, Manchester.) Lambert holds high rank among experimenting modern sculptors in England, working in many materials and designing sculpture for buildings as well as free sculpture for interiors

RUSKIN wrote: "There is no law, no principle, based practice, which may not be overthrown in a moment, by th of a new condition, or the invention of a new material . . . Th probably near when a new system of architectural laws will be d adapted entirely to metallic construction[1] . . . The furnace and t shall be at your service: you shall draw out your plates of g beat out your bars of iron till you have encompassed us all . . . wit perspective of black skeleton and blinding square . . . What aft . . . If you cannot rest content with Palladio neither will you with . . . As soon as we possess a body of sculptors able, and willing, and leave from the English public, to carve on the façades of our ca portraits of the living bishops, deans, canons and choristers who minister in the said cathedrals; and on the façades of our public bu portraits of the men chiefly moving or acting in the same; and buildings, generally, the birds and flowers which are singing and in the fields around them, we shall have a school of English archi Not till then . . ."[3]

Ruskin wrote this the best part of a century ago; we are alre encompassed by "endless perspective of black skeleton and square"; and though I, for one, find the architectural qualities modern architecture—(the use of modern materials, the concentra functional fitness, and on the play of forms, proportions, balance recessions and so forth)—entirely satisfying, there are many wh Ruskin's longing for more sculpture on buildings, and some, Directors of Imperial Chemicals, who have sought salvation by a façades with portraits of the men "chiefly moving or acting" buildings.

What are the arguments for sculpture on buildings in the moder

It is arguable, I think, from the social point of view that sculptur be used in this way in order to give work to unemployed sculptor true that neither western civilisation (the local organisation of s health and satisfactions) nor contemporary culture (creative conce spiritual values) now calls for sculpture on buildings on a scale t large economic problems, as the Periclean programme solved economic problem for Athens and the carving of the Gothic façade others at a later date. But we live in a period of rebuilding which to coincide with a time when, in England, the Cubist-Classical Mo has produced a veritable renaissance of the sculptor's art; and w do worse than imitate Pericles who tried to employ as many citiz industries and talents as possible in the rebuilding scheme of wh Parthenon was part.[4] There is at any rate something to be sai the social standpoint, for the employment of all the original (c sculptors in this way; such sculptors are now, as always, very

[1] *The Seven Lamps of Architecture.* Int para. 2 and Chapter II, para. 9 (1849)
[2] *The Two Paths*—IV. Para. 101 (185 ton, it will be remembered, was the ar the Crystal Palace.
[3] *The Seven Lamps of Architecture.* P the Second Edition (1855).
[4] Cf. my *The Meaning of Modern Scu* 70 and 71.

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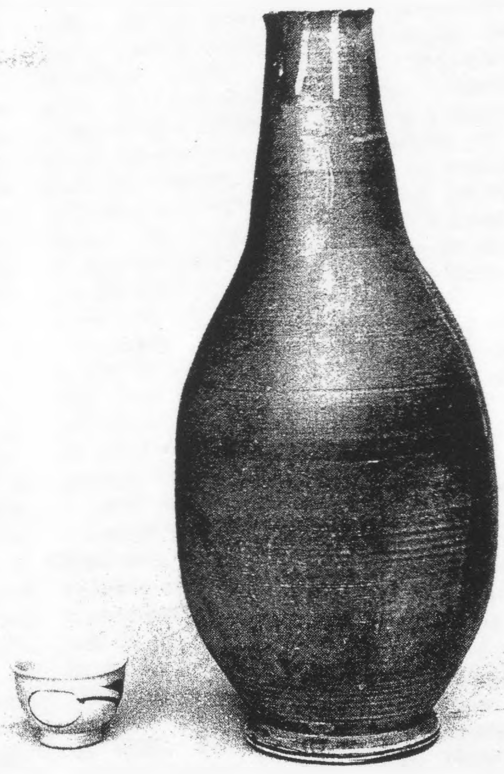
RICHARD BEDFORD. Pea (left). Bedford has carved a series of formalised plant sculptures in the round ; some in marble, as this one, and others in alabaster. He has specialised in the study of plant forms and, if occasion arose, could supply an architect with sculptured ornaments of a new kind

STAITE MURRAY. Pots. An increasing demand is likely, not only for small sculpture, but also for pottery according with the severe architecture of the modern functional interior



riors, for small sculptured objects in the style
d the materials of those rooms. At present
e original sculptors tend to work on a large,
not indeed a monumental, scale—being a
tle obsessed, I fancy, with the desire to be
nployed on outdoor sculpture and with the
ways fatal aim of attracting attention in
hibitions. But I can see no reason why they
ould not collaborate with creative architects
interior equipment as well as with architect
anners of new " squares " and buildings,
rdens, highways and so forth.

One word more. The Cubist Movement has
eated not only a renaissance of architecture
d sculpture, but also a renaissance of pot-
ry. The architectural character of contem-
rary pottery makes a forcible appeal to those
ho appreciate this renaissance ; and since
ttery, serene in its sheer form and colour,
cords well with modern interiors I foresee
increased use of it to provide points of focus
d interest in severely functional rooms.

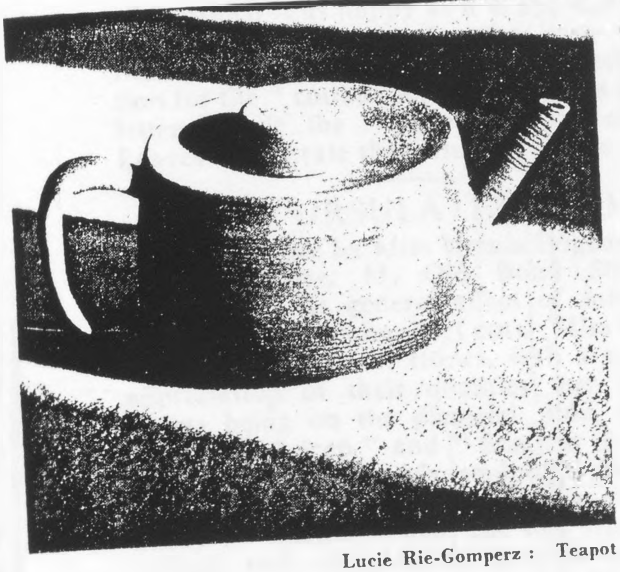
R.H.W.

R. M. Wilenski

2

ARCHITECTURE and DECORATIVE ART in AUSTRIA

By Dr. P. W. Born



Lucie Rie-Gomperz : Teapot

It is not easy for a foreigner to understand the present position of Architecture and Decorative Art in Austria ; a rapid glance, therefore, at the evolution of modern style in that country might be of interest.

The rapid development of Vienna into a large modern city between the years 1850-1880 led to a prodigious activity in building. This meant that many large-scale architectural and decorative problems were set to the architect and designer of the period : those were usually solved by borrowing from the traditional styles, such as the Renaissance or the Baroque. The man who exercised the greatest influence on the æsthetic tendency of the period was Hans Makart, a painter (1849-1884) ; the 'eighties were often called the " Makart Zeit " (Makart-Time). Theatre too, which has always been of greater importance in Vienna than any other form of art, left its mark on the style of the period : façades became overloaded with ornate moulds, with turrets, columns and gables. In the interior decoration there was a great accumulation of carved furniture, over-decorated metal vessels and superabundance of artificial flowers and draperies.

It was not until the beginning of the " Secession "-movement in 1898 that a counter-current of æsthetic ideas could make itself felt in Vienna. This movement was contemporaneous with a similar movement in Germany, the " Jugendstil " (Style of Youth) and the " Art Nouveau " in France, although from the beginning the Austrian movement was more closely related to the ideas of William Morris in England.

The leading personality of this movement was Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), a painter, whose style is a strange blend of neo-impressionistic painting and geometrical ornamentation, although his influence was felt more in the development of industrial and decorative art than in the technique of painting. The Secessionist movement was unable, however, to achieve a final emancipation of the arts from the traditional styles as it was confined mainly to theories of æsthetics. Architecture alone could give the necessary impulse to the development of new forms. And indeed it was a great architect, Otto Wagner (1841-1918) who first showed the way from the traditional style of the Makart-time to the creation of a new style which to-day is called " Functionalism." The development of this architectural style was determined in the course of the carrying out of a difficult technical task : the construction of the Vienna City-railway. To a certain extent Orro Wagner too felt the influence of the Secessionist movement. Only after the construction of the " Postsparkassa " (Post Office Savings Bank)—a pioneer work of great importance for the whole of Europe—does he emerge as a master of non-ornamental architecture, and a creator of purely cubistic forms. As a professor at the Vienna Academy of Art he left his mark on a whole generation of pupils who later developed his ideas further in their own individual ways.

Another architect, Adolf Loos (1870-1933) might be called a precursor of " Functionalism." His first large building, a block of offices in Michaeler Platz, raised a storm of indignation in 1910 ; to-day it seems to us to be one of the earliest examples of modern architecture.

Josef Hoffman, one of the founders of the " Secessionist " movement, represents yet another tendency in Architecture. Borrowing from the cubistic style of Wagner, he succeeded in creating a very personal, if rather fanciful, style of his own which is generally known as the " Viennese Style." This style was adopted by the " Wiener Werkstätte " (Viennese Studios) which he founded in 1903 and which ceased to exist in the crisis of 1931. Outside his own country he became widely known by his Stoclet House in Brussels which made a great impression in 1911. Josef Hoffman is a professor at the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Industrial Art in Vienna.

The foundation of the " Österreichischer Werkbund " (Austrian Industrial Guild) in 1912

Design For To-Day, 1935 Dec

Miss Barbara Watson, who shows 24 oil paintings at the French Gallery, 11, Berkeley Square, seems to be interested chiefly in colour pattern. The most attractive painting is "Beatenburg," in which the regular shapes of pine trees in mountain scenery are used with very good effect in a scheme of grey, white, and buff. In another room there is a collection of wood-engravings, new and old, by Mr. Eric Gill. Perfect in craftsmanship, and generally effective—if a little mannered—from a decorative point of view, these invite the closest examination. The newest are a set of illustrations for "The Green Ship," by Patrick Miller, in which conventionalized waves are used as a setting for the figures with an effect which is as happy as it is appropriate. The familiar "Illustrations for the Four Gospels" maintain their dignity and excite fresh admiration for the "counterpoint" of figures and initial letters, while the "Four Versions of Girl in Leaves" illustrate the virtuosity of the artist.

MISS URSULA EDGCUMBE

The sculpture by Miss Ursula Edgcumbe at the Leger Galleries, 13, Old Bond Street, wins approval by its general effect of modesty and disinclination to take short cuts. Miss Edgcumbe employs a variety of stones, with a sympathetic appreciation of their qualities, her formal instincts being on the pictorial side, though in "Woman Asleep" and "Summer Afternoon" she has produced truly sculptural pieces. In "Dance in a Fugue" in very low relief, practically an incised design, she has attempted the difficult task of adapting upright figures to a circular panel, and surmounted it by the device of planting the feet in a circle "on plan," so that the imaginary rounding out of the wreath of figures towards the spectator overcomes the uprights and makes what is in effect a spherical composition.

MR BERNARD LEACH

Though, to make a convenient distinction, Mr. Bernard Leach, of St. Ives, comes into the category of "studio" potters, he has extended his activities in the direction of everyday use, and, though it includes stoneware, his present exhibition at the Little Gallery, 3, Ellis Street, Sloane Street, derives its special interest from the slipware.

This is in the English tradition but with a difference, because it embodies the technical knowledge of Oriental methods which Mr. Leach acquired by working in Japan. It may, indeed, be described as a "marriage" of English and Oriental qualities in forms adapted to contemporary English use, and it is interesting to learn that a similar process is taking place in Japan.

The general effect of the pottery—jugs, bowls, cups, dishes—is one of sobriety, browns, greys, and buffs predominating in the colouring. The slip decorations, dark or light, pick up the old English tradition of wavy lines and chevrons, with occasional stylized animal, bird, or plant forms, with that response to the flow of the material which brings back happy memories of childish "writing" with treacle on the nursery suet pudding.

The Broadcasting Programmes for to-day and to-morrow and Broadcasting Notes will be found on page 18

The shock of novelty has gone from many of Meyerbeer's original effects: they have been used still more effectively elsewhere. But to audiences of that day such an alliance of dramatic and symphonic music, the orchestral resource of Germany, and the passionate utterances of Italian Opera Seria seemed, not surprisingly, startling. His weaknesses no one will deny; but the skill with which he uses the chorus in dramatic *ensemble* was a valuable contribution to the operatic form. The elegance of the tenor solo "Plus blanche que la plus blanche hermine," with its curiously effective viola accompaniment, of Urbain's "Nobles seigneurs," and of the duet between Raoul and the Queen need not greatly fear comparison with Rossini's graces. The scene in the Pré aux Clercs with the duet between Valentine and Marcel, can stand unashamed beside the work of Verdi's middle period, which, indeed, it greatly influenced; while the love duet and the scene of the blessing of the swords in the fourth act reach a level of inspiration which makes the enthusiasm of those days at any rate understandable.

There is one obstacle, however, in the way of a renewed interest in such a work as *Les Huguenots*. Even if the standard of singing has not declined since the days of the original production (as some people insist), it is certain at least that the interest in the art has waned. Prodigies of technique we have; but it is not vocal technique which to-day grips the attention of the public. The element of display so vital in Meyerbeer's time has passed from singing to dancing. That is perhaps the chief reason why *Les Huguenots* seems so entirely of another age: while a ballet such as *Giselle* (which dates only from a few years later) can fill two theatres simultaneously as it did in London recently. When Maria Semenova, the leading ballerina of Moscow, recently revived this part at the Opéra, it was possible to see in her performance exactly that emphasis on technique, rather than interpretation, which eventually brought *bel canto* into disrepute. Her amazing "jetés" and the speed and brilliance of her point work arouse something of the excitement which comes from watching a sporting contest. The admiration which she wins is dangerously near to the esteem felt for those, like all too many an Italian singer of to-day, who conquer by strength and endurance.

THE OPERA.

LAST WEEK AT COVENT GARDEN.

"MEISTERSINGER."

Monday "Meistersinger," and what a fine beginning of a season! There is nothing but good to say of the performance. Everyone looked his or her part, not merely by the make-up, but by stance and carriage, and the dignified way he fitted into the scheme. With a reassuring voice Torsten Ralf added a little philosophy to the part of Walther, and that balanced Rudolf-Böckelmann's quiet fervour as Sachs. Heddle Nash makes a David that satisfies from every point of view, and anyone who can make the rigmarole about the modes and tones come alive, deserves an extra good mark. If Wagner intended Beckmesser for Hanslick, then Karl Neumann showed us that that Hanslick was neither a worm nor an ass, and the touch of Loge that he put into the part kept it alive. The Mastersingers, chiefly English, were individually and generally musical, led by the fine singing of Ludwig Weber (Pogner) and Herbert Jansen (Kothner). Tiana Lemnitz made us wish Wagner had given Eva more to do; her share, and Margery Booth's, in the quintet had much to do with its success. The apprentices needed another rehearsal or two. Sir Thomas Beecham's unhurrying, unresting tempi were a delight.

"RIGOLETTO."

With "Rigoletto" on Tuesday all the values changed. Pathos as the Italian understands it, or on that occasion understood it, is to be induced by liberties taken with both pitch and time, which have hardened into conventions. From the Duke (G. Lauri-Volpi) squeezing the last drop of sweetness out of his high A's, to Rigoletto (A. Syed) including in his A both a G sharp and a B flat, and Gilda (Margherita Perras) gradually shaping the note to the required pitch, we lived in paroxysms of deep passion; so that when Margery Booth uttered her two short sentences (as page) in perfect tune and time, we stepped suddenly into another world. Vincenzo Bellezza conducted with the taste of tradition which is the sufficient substitute for the fire of adventure.

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"Parsifal" on Wednesday pranked in new flower scenery and dresses—girls that would go into the cups, and cups that might have more girls in them. The "Verwandlungsscene" was by lantern slides, and there were new bells in better tune and better played. It seems that shooting swans is not quite so unheard of a thing in the Grail-forest as Gurnemanz thought, since they keep a bier there for dead swans, turned polished.

COMING ENGAGEMENTS.

To-morrow.
5.45.—Covent Garden. Parsifal.

Tuesday.
8.0.—Covent Garden. Aida.
8.15.—R.A.M. Bach Cantata.
8.30.—Queen's Hall. Frieda Hempel.
8.30.—Grotrian Hall. Vera Henderson (pianoforte).
8.30.—Wigmore Hall. Margareta Harvey-Samuel (pianoforte).

Wednesday.
8.30.—Covent Garden. Rheingold.
8.30.—Wigmore Hall. Moriz Rosenthal.

Thursday.
8.0. — Northern Polytechnic. Modern Symphony Orchestra.
8.0.—6, Queen's-square. Arnold Dolmetsch.
8.15.—46, Grosvenor-street. Kathleen Ewart (vocalist).
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8.30. — Wigmore Hall. Peers Coetmore (vocalist).

Friday.
5.45.—Covent Garden. Walküre.
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THE RISE OF POTTING.

BERNARD LEECH.

BY JAN GORDON.

Twenty-five years ago the "pot" was thing of little worth. The art of potting was, if not moribund, at least in a state of suspended animation. To-day, owing to devoted enthusiasts, the pot has reached a pinnacle of admiration. Collectors bid furiously, and unique pieces soar far beyond the purse of the normal man. Why, in the general revival of interest in the crafty Arts has potting leapt so far ahead of its companions? The answer that occurs to my mind contains something of an odd paradox.

The contemporary revival of interest in the Craft-Arts has been developed in a spirit of something like exasperation with the Fine Arts. The Crafts, rightly considering that they had their own raison d'être, and thus their own logic in development, justly resented the attempted domination of the Fine Arts which would intrude with the excuse of decoration. And so for the last forty years or so the Craft-Arts have been doing their best to get rid of the Fine Arts, and have been seeking their own salvation.

POTTING AS FINE ART.

But during the same time the Fine Arts also have been experiencing a sort of technical psycho-analysis, and have been shedding at full speed their "nature" neuroses, until they could dance freely in the bare bones of form, line and colour. But during the process the Fine Art of clay modelling found, almost to its hand, a related Craft-Art, shaped in the same materials, abstract in form, although inspired by an apparent purpose. It is true that for a long time valuable works in china or pottery have been relegated to cabinets, for admiration only, and so have actually usurped the functions of the Fine Arts. Thus potting has contrived to straddle both branches, appertaining to Fine Art on the one side and to Craft-Art on the other, absorbing the new-born enthusiasms of both. Yet, in fact, though potters always lay claim to be craftsmen, the high art of potting, that is, the production of rare pieces with unique glazes, belongs to the most high-brow of Fine Arts, and is cherished as such. Much pottery is abstract Fine Art camouflaged in the sheep's clothing of a humble craft.

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Bernard Leech, an exhibition of whose recent works in stoneware and slipware is now open at the Little Gallery, 3, Ellis-street, Sloane-square, has long been one of the prime movers in the art of the "pot." I was once an art student with Leech, and I remember how surprised I was to hear that he had gone East to study the Craft-Arts of Japan. In a foreword to an exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Craft which is due to follow his own exhibition at the Little Gallery, Leech reveals how, with two Japanese craftsmen, Tomemoto and Yanagi, he took an active part in the revival of traditional Craft-Art in Japan, before it had had time to be quite swamped by the flood of Western industrial products. This movement, he records, has now become nation wide.

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THE CABLES ROUND OUR FEET.

Simultaneously receiving the Press in two Mayfair hotels this week were Mrs. Natalie Kalmus, wife of the inventor of Technicolor, and Mr. Lloyd Corrigan, director of the Technicolor pictures "La Cucaracha" and "The Dancing Pirate." Mr. Corrigan is here on holiday; Mrs. Kalmus has come from America, with a train of twelve technical experts, to make the first British colour picture under the new three-colour Technicolor process. Its title, at the time of writing, is "Wings of the Morning"; its star is to be Anabella. For the second, third—or is it fourth?—time, and this time with some shadow of a reason, we are told that colour in the cinema has definitely arrived.

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I don't propose to argue, at this juncture, on the imminence or propriety of an all-colour cinema. In a few days' time we shall be seeing "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine," which should, whether good or bad, provide me with an inescapable text. I am not really interested this week in colour at all, except in its indirect bearings on the film industry. But it will have indirect bearings, and they will be important, and we shall have to consider them. Colour in the cinema will be an opportunity, as well as a manifestation. All sorts of things will happen in the new cinema that the present practitioners are not in the least aware of, and a great number of them will be things that they don't in the least desire.

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Every change in the fabric of an industry, whether it is an overnight revolution like the coming of sound, or a gradual substitution such as most of us anticipate with colour, involves a change in machinery and personnel. Colour, like the talkies, will have a mortuary as the scene of its investiture. And that, it seems to me, will be an admirable occasion for getting rid of a lot of other bodies that have long been dead but won't lie down.

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The cinema, only a quarter of a century old, is already cluttered up with rules and inhibitions that nothing short of a revolution will scatter. Well, we are going to have a revolution. And during the months in which film audiences are getting used to colour, arguing about colour, opposing and belauding colour, all sorts of minor dispositions may happen. Old favourites may be dropped or cast in new types of part, old partnerships may be dissolved, old stories can be changed, old taboos broken, and after a little while no one will murmur. In the cinema nothing is either indispensable or indisposable. It is a case of choosing the right time to make the break.

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AÏDA.

On Thursday, Giacomo Lauri-Volpi, as Radames, provided some really coarse

answer that occurs to my mind contains something of an odd paradox.

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The fact that Leech has worked in a country where potting and such crafts were practised, like the vote, by the people and for the people, gives him a more "realistic" outlook than that held by many an artist potter. Though he brings to his job a craftsmanship and an experience wider and deeper than many of his confreres, his wares are primarily, as peasant objects are, for use.

Much of his present work is in slipware, and an apparent blend of Japanese technique and Old English methods. But, as he points out in his pamphlet, this process has also been widely developed in Japan by himself and the Japanese potters Hamada, Tomemoto, and Kanai. On April 30 Mr. Leech gave a lecture on the subject, illustrated by some unusual film pictures, which he has taken, of Japanese craftsmen at work. The lecture will be repeated during the course of the Japanese exhibition on May 13.

WEDGWOOD.

Nevertheless, one cannot overlook the essential value of the Fine Art potter to the industry as a whole. Though he

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So far, every studio has been jogging along, carrying a vast load of passengers and liabilities. Somehow, these things are taken for granted, just as it is taken for granted that advertising copy for the cinema must be vulgar, that publicity must be blatant, and that posters must be as nearly as possible lewd.

***

The rule of the cinema has come to be as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be. But the rule is not infrangible and there are many intelligent people in the studios, as well as outside, who would gladly see it broken. Waste, chaos, and ostentation are not really essential to the making of films.

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There is no real reason, for example, why the industry should [illegible]

Painted stoneware jar with lid, by Bernard Leach

THE LITTLE CRAFT BOOKS

Edited by F. V. BURRIDGE

THE ART OF THE POTTER

By DORA M. BILLINGTON

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON · NEW YORK · TORONTO
1937

valued, and his pioneer work in pottery remembered, when *Joseph Vance* is perhaps forgotten.

De Morgan's painted decoration owed something to the study of Persian, Italian, and Hispano-Moresque pottery, but just as much to the influence of his friend William Morris, whose ideals and enthusiasms he shared. If his brush-work lacks the swiftness and expressive touch we have learned to look for now, it should be remembered that there was no tradition of calligraphic brush-work whatever in his day, and also that having, for the sake of his health, to live a great deal in Italy, much of the actual painting was done by assistants in London. He was the only potter among Morris's disciples and contributed the revival of pottery-painting to the many other revivals associated with that remarkable man. All sorts of people began to paint on china, and, although much of the work was feeble and misguided, there have been some brilliant exceptions, such as the work of Henry and Louise Powell, and the spirited experiments made by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant with the maiolica technique—exuberant and refreshing in these days of sparse and timid pattern.

During the last few years many studio potters have turned their attention to high-temperature stonewares, like the old Sung wares of China. It would be interesting to trace all the various factors that have combined to place so many potters under this spell. A gradual appreciation of surface qualities, of severe simple shapes, of sculptural rather than pattern and colour values, have all helped to foster interest in high-temperature wares. Technically this is to the good; such wares if they can be achieved are 'good pot', hard and non-porous, and aesthetically satisfying in their severity of form and soft subdued colour.

The first experiments of this kind in Europe appear

to have been made in the latter part of the nineteenth century by a few potters trained at Sèvres and whose published notes have since proved very useful. English potters owe much to the inspiration of Mr. Bernard Leach, who learned in Japan to make stoneware that is in direct descent from that of the old potters of the Far East, with the same harmony of shape, size, colour, and texture, and the same magic calligraphy; and to Mr. Staite Murray whose magnificent big pots with their interesting mysterious surface-treatments reach out to possibilities as yet unexplored.

Throwing has been saved in England by the studio potter, just as it was in danger of dying out, and it has returned in a more complete form, not as a first stage to turning. In pottery sculpture a revival of the Chelsea porcelain type of figure has given place to broader, simpler compositions.

Glazes and colours are no longer the mystery they were. With the help of modern chemistry they are being recovered by potters like Mr. and Mrs. Charles Vyse. Where one has blazed the trail others follow, and soon all these secrets will be an open book.

Studio pottery has developed so rapidly that there has been no time to ask where it is all leading. The joy of doing the job tends to be an end in itself. Is there even in music or dancing more joy in the doing than in the throwing of a fine pot? And there are not, as yet, too many beautiful pots in the world, though far too many ugly ones.

With the notable exception of Mr. Michael Cardew, who makes fine useful slip ware in a traditional English seventeenth-century manner, Miss Pleydell-Bouverie, and some of the work of Mr. Bernard Leach, studio pottery tends to be simply decorative. Cannot useful things be made in stoneware? Utility is surely not

compatible with beauty though it imposes its own conditions. The Sung bowls and dishes were presumably made for use; what a pity that, for those who could appreciate it, fine stoneware should not be designed for modern table use!

The question is a serious one for those to whom studio pottery is to be a means of earning a living. At present, unfortunately, people who will pay a high price for a cabinet piece will not pay more than a mass-production price for something to use, and the potter is faced with the paradox that a beautiful, but purely decorative, shape may sell for some pounds, and be considered worth it, whilst an equally beautiful jug or tea-pot, probably more trouble to make, can only be sold for as many shillings. One would like to say to the purchaser, Is it not more worth while to pay a reasonable price for something really beautiful to use, even if it may eventually get broken?—and to the potter, Is it not more worth while to try to make useful, as well as beautiful, things and to sell many as cheaply as possible? Apart from ethical considerations, which may be irrelevant, there is an aesthetic danger in being too precious.

The studio potter cannot, and should not, attempt to compete with mass production on its own lines, but there is no reason why he should be too reserved and precious to take his place in the life of the community both through his own productions and the help he can give to trade production. Only thus will his art become really vital and valuable.

If beautiful pots were available for every one who could appreciate them, what a vitalizing influence this would have on the mass-produced article!—and studio potters can only justify the making of pottery for the sake of its beauty if thereby they can bring beauty into the whole industry.

DATES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF POTTERY