

THE CHEVALIER COLLECTION.

This consists of 250 sketches and water-colour paintings made by the late Mr. Nicholas Chevalier, who visited New Zealand in 1866, and to whose work reference has already been made. (See report on the rearrangement of Museum exhibits.)

THE DOMINION MUSEUM COLLECTION.

The Museum collection contains twelve oil-paintings; sixteen pieces of sculpture (originals and copies); seventy-three water-colours, sixty-eight of which are by General Robley, and are previously referred to (see report on rearrangement of Museum exhibits); fifty black-and-white drawings and pencil sketches, four of which are by the eminent artist the late J. F. Lewis, R.A.; 250 casts of medals, engraved gems, and coins of all periods; a large collection of ancient Greek and Roman coins; twenty-four original drawings in various media by masters of the early Italian schools; eighty etchings and engravings formerly in the possession of King George III; and numerous objects of art now contained in the Egyptian, Indian, and other collections in the Museum.

Among the oil-paintings is one which is undoubtedly the genuine work of an early master. The fine preservation of this canvas, with its cool silvery tones in the underpainting, and the rich glazes which have withstood the ravages of time, is evidence of the careful preparation of the grounds and the thorough drying and bleaching which are so characteristic of the early Flemish and Italian schools. Another canvas in the collection is a copy of the painting by Raffaele in the Museo Nazionale at Naples.

The large collection of Greek and Roman coins offers a rare field of study to artists and students of ancient history. Few cabinet treasures can trace so long and unbroken a pedigree, and fewer still can show a line of ancestors so little touched by time. The study of these ancient symbols of civilizations swept away in the wreckage of the past recalls the words of the French poet, Theophile Gautier:—

All passes. Art alone
Enduring stays to us;
The bust outlasts the throne,
The coin, Tiberius.

In the collection of etchings and engravings made by King George III there are twelve of Rembrandt's most famous works, including the well-known "Windmill" and the "Amsterdam," which for atmosphere and for delicacy of treatment are probably the finest of the master's works. There are also the works of many of the masters of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Albrecht Durer, whose works are referred to in the Monrad collection, is represented here by an exceedingly rare print, "The Martyrdom of St. Catherine." This fine engraving is on the very thick coarse paper which was then manufactured, and is printed in the usual pale bistre ink of Durer's day.

THE NEW ZEALAND ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS COLLECTION.

There are seventy works of art in the Academy's gallery in Whitmore Street. The estimated value of this collection is between £3,500 and £4,000.

THE NATIONAL COLLECTION.

Eighty works of art were acquired as the result of the movement in 1911 which followed the announcement by the Government of its intention to establish a Dominion Art Gallery. The details of the successful campaign that provided £6,000 for the purchase of pictures are worthy of record here.

"The Council of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, having in hand a grant from the Government of £500, arranged with Mr. John Baillie, a former member of the Academy, and the owner of a well-known art gallery in London, to bring out a collection of works by British artists. With this representative collection on view it was felt that an appeal might be made to the public for funds for the purchase of pictures for the proposed national gallery. The council therefore waited upon the City Council and asked whether that body, in the event of £5,000 being raised, would subsidize it to the extent of £1,000. This the Council agreed to do, with the result that after an energetic canvass the amount was raised, either in cash or in value of pictures purchased at the exhibition and presented to the gallery. These are held in trust by the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts until such time as the national Art Gallery is built, when they will be handed over together with the Academy's original collection."*

SCULPTURE.

This collection of thirteen works in the purest Carrara marble by Mr. C. S. Summers was produced by him in Rome, and on them, as he once remarked to me, he has spent the best years of his life. The finest probably is "Eve," a beautiful figure slightly larger than life-size, standing on a revolving grey marble pedestal, bearing four carved bas-reliefs. Another, and in some respects more exquisitely delicate piece of work, is "Modesty," a veiled bust, in which the lace veil that drapes the features is so skilfully treated as to seem half-transparent. Two other particularly fine pieces are "Deborah, the Prophetess," and "Susanna surprised by the Elders." The "Bacchante and the Infant Bacchus" is a replica of the richly beautiful classical work which stands on the grand staircase of the Royal Palace in Rome; and the "St. Cecilia" is a replica of the famous work in the Church of St. Cecilia. Busts of Socrates and Demosthenes are also in the collection. These pieces of statuary were purchased by the Government for £2,200, and are temporarily housed in the bath buildings at Rotorua.

* Ann. Rep. N.Z. Acad. Fine Arts, 1911-12.