



PLEASANT HOMES

by Elizabeth MacRea Boykin

WHAT AMERICAN ARTISTS ARE DOING IN CERAMICS, WEAVING, GLASS, METAL, WOOD

Our Native Craftsmen, at work in Country Houses, Can Fill Demands of a Discriminating Public Even When Imports are Cut Off.

America won't be caught short as she was when the last European war broke out. Not in the field of the arts, that is. For while we haven't certainly reached the point where local talent can entirely replace the hand-made things we have traditionally gotten from Europe, present indications from a recent survey reveal most of us will not seriously miss the importations.

We've been gradually working up to this point even since that sudden halt of imports in 1914, when our stores sold the last of their European art goods and got no more of the charming little bibelots, the hand-painted china, the hand-woven fabrics, all those frivolous unecessaries that add to the colour and graciousness of life. Then there was practically nothing we could do about it. A few stray artists here and there didn't make a dent on such a big gaping market. But thenceforth there began to develop in this country an increasingly active group of American craftsmen whose numbers grew even during those palmy days of the twenties when Europe's art wares poured into a fabulous market. Their numbers increased further throughout the thirties, as tariffs began to work in their favour.

It is interesting to ferret out some of these native American craftsmen and



Modern flower designs decorate the plates of Edith Coskeroff. They are in gorgeous colours—brilliant Peking blues and metallic lusters.

discover how satisfying a craft can yet be, even in an age of mass production. For most of them live with their kilns or their loom or their forges as closely as ever did the old world craftsmen. And many of them are as oblivious to the lure of the city and civilization. Many belong to the back-to-the-land movement and California seems to be the favoured haunt of these independent artists, some say because the movies attract so many designers westward; others maintain that it's because the climate lures artists who don't want to get sucked into the sterner competitive life of the eastern industrial world. At any rate, many of them are living the life of Remy in their small sunny homes.

A One-Kiln Man

Some are clever about marketing their things to good advantage, others aren't, but that doesn't seem to be the big



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Tapestry wall hanging by Helen Ford Slauson of Westchester County. It is called "The Apple Pickers" and the colours are largely gold and brown with red and green accents.

point. A New York distributor of this type of merchandise was scolding, in a friendly way, about her pet potter in California. "I've tried and tried to convince him that he should expand and get two kilns, but he can't see it. So orders just pile up while he plods along at his one kiln."

And lest you're thinking that these craftsmen are but a scattered handful, just begin to notice how much hand-made American ware you see in the stores all the time. There are far too many artists of this type even to list here; we mention only those in whom we have been especially interested. There are many other important ones.

Edith Coskeroff, who lives and works in upstate New York, makes perfectly beautiful pottery, though it has an elegance about it that makes the word pottery seem inadequate. It is modern and yet somehow romantic in feeling, executed in brilliant blues and in metallic lusters, often with an exotic flower design. Her plates are very lovely; so are some of her vases and heads.

Ceramic Leaders

Wayland Gregory is a ceramic artist known particularly for some of the lovely design he has made for Lenox china, one of America's proudest achievements. Mr. Gregory lives and works near Bound Brook. Henry Varnum Poor is regarded as the dean of American ceramic artists, having been one of the pioneers in evolving an American modern pottery. Primarily a painter, he does little now in ceramics except exhibition pieces. But in his home back in the hills of Rockland county he has made by hand all the tiles for the mantels and the bathroom; while the modern home of his neighbour, Maxwell Anderson, has more of his individual tiles and one-of-a-kind ceramic pieces.

Leslie Sample and Margaret Mears Gabriel in southern California have a one-kiln pottery where they make a very excellent quality of modern pottery that is nearly a semi-porcelain, modern in shape and design, subtle in colouring.

Sorcha Boru and Ellsworth Stewart started with a kiln in the barn of their California home; now they have built a special studio in the yard, but they still continue to do their own turning and firing and designing. They make fantastic little figures and grotesques along with more utilitarian pieces—all made by hand and yet able to compete in the commercial market.

Mary Lewis of New Jersey is one of the purists of hand pottery making, devoting herself mainly to exhibition pieces made by coil, scornful even the wheel. She has taught classes in pottery in various club and school groups in the New York area.

Modern Weavers

Scattered throughout the country in much the same spirit are weavers of hand-loomed fabrics. It is interesting to observe their influence on machine-made fabrics, for their experiments are responsible for many of the unusual textures now in vogue in all categories of fabrics. It is interesting also to discover that many of these hand-loomed materials made up on special order can be sold at about the same prices as the so-called decorator lines of machine fabrics (which doesn't mean exactly cheap!).

Dorothy Liebes of California is the most spectacular name associated with hand-woven fabrics, not only because of the beautiful fabrics she has created, but also because she was responsible for the outstanding exhibition of

craftsman. Besides the natives, there are many distinguished European craftsmen who have become naturalized and are working here and may be expected to train others in their workshops. Mariana von Allesch is the most noted in the field of hand-blown glass. Tommi Parzinger designs silver, porcelain, everything that catches his fancy. Elizabeth Berz makes charming gay ceramic figures and heads in New York.

Hand or Machine

The differentiation between the hand craftsman and the designer for the machine is also difficult to make, since many artists do both. The industrial designer, who has come into the picture importantly just within the last decade, further complicates an attempt at specific definition. Richard Bach at the Metropolitan Museum, who has sponsored the most significant shows in industrial arts over a period of the last twenty years, does not feel that such a distinction is very important. Many hand craftsmen make things that can be equally well executed by the machine; others do things that can only be produced by hand; others create only for the machine.

The important thing he feels is that the artist is significantly in the picture to stay. And not only does he see an interesting future for the designer in mass production but he feels that very soon the arts of the hand will also be produced in America as comprehensively, if not in the same economic vernacular, as in Europe. Much of his interest is in what he calls "serial production"—that is, an object produced by an artist that may be reproduced by twos and threes, by the dozen or by the thousand, depending on the article and the demand. The important thing will be that it began as a single piece from the hands of an artist.

In considering the work of modern American craft artists, we'd like to explain also a little about how they develop their ideas for the commercial market. Usually an agent or artist's

American decorative arts at the San Francisco Exposition last summer.

Helen Ford Slauson of Westchester county, N.Y., is another distinguished name in hand-weaving. For she has made a specialty of modern hand-made tapestry in the Gobelin weave. Her designs are modern and decorative, imaginative and interesting in colour. Besides exhibition pieces which have been shown in many leading galleries throughout the country, she executes all sorts of special orders, such as a set of dining room chair seats for a home in New Jersey with different local wild flowers for their design. Another commission for the George Vanderbilts was for a set of dining chair seats with the different wild animals they'd hunted for their design.

New York Artists

The Krolls, brother and sister, who grew up in Buffalo but now work in New York City produce a luxurious type of hand-loomed fabric of versatile textures, patterns and colours on special decorator orders.

Frances Miller of New York City has been from the first a leading figure in the hand-made fabric world. She has been concerned with rugs as well as with fabrics, while her fabrics have not been confined just to effects achieved by weave but also by hand blocking and novel dyeing processes. Always a modernist, her studio has for more than ten years been the source for original fabrics and rugs among discerning decorators.

Other significant names in the field of American hand weaving include Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Sternhof of California, the Cranbrook colony outside of Detroit, the Tenafly weavers in New Jersey.

Glass, Metal and Wood

There are fewer hand craftsmen of American origin in the field of glass, metal and wood than in ceramics and weaving, probably because much of the work of the outstanding designers is being executed by large manufacturers so satisfactorily. Clare B. Wells, of Chicago, whose work has been shown at the Metropolitan Museum, is doing as interesting things in silver as we've seen from an American hand. The Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston has long produced American ware of distinction. In glass, the name of Maurice Heaton of New York is outstanding—comes from a family of stain glass artists. In wood carving, there are draft groups in Cape Cod and in Minnesota, while Peter Williams in New York has done fresh modern pieces of wood. A good many sculptors work in wood.

There is a fine line of distinction to be drawn when one attempts to be specific about who is an American



These charming ceramic studies of children were made right in New York City. Although the artist in charge, Elizabeth Berz, is a native of Vienna, she works with American assistants whom she is training, and we were interested in these because they demonstrate what can be done with an old world art produced under new work conditions.

representative is responsible for digging them out and guiding them along the lines of consumer demand. One of the most interesting of these is neither young nor famous, but she spends a great deal of her time tracking around the country going to see people who can make things. Her name is Clem Hall and one of the reasons why she has been able to produce so many talented craftsmen is that she herself is an artist, a graduate of the Chicago Art Institute and well known for her work in hand-made silver.

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Bad To Worse

(From an Exchange)

The music master of a school near Bradford had been lecturing on Mozart, Beethoven, and other great musicians, when one of the scholars was struck by an original thought. "How is it, sir," he asked, "that musicians are always so ugly?"

The music master looked embarrassed. The seeker after truth suddenly realized with horror that his question might be taken personally, and he hastened to make amends. "Of course, sir," he said, tactfully, "I only mean the good musicians."



Sercha Boru, California potter, is shown here with a tray of fantastic figures ready for the kiln.

Twenty Years Ago

From The Porcupine Advance Files

Twenty years ago The Advance was emphasizing the benefits the people of the town and district would receive by trading in Timmins. "The merchants here," said The Advance, "have large and up-to-date stocks and there is variety for practically every purse and every taste in the matter of Christmas goods. In addition there are a number of special sales in progress with genuinely reduced prices for the best lines of goods. The advertisements in this issue give some suggestion of the values that may be obtained here this Christmas season. Outsiders may well consider Timmins as a special trading centre this year. All along the line it will pay to come Timmins." There was more along the same line. It may be noted that The Advance twenty years ago was an especially big paper—twelve pages. Double that size today is not considered a very out-of-the-ordinary.

At the regular meeting of the Timmins town council twenty years ago John W. Fogg, chairman of the public works committee, gave what was generally considered as a very excellent report in regard to the proposed joint incinerator for the Town of Timmins and the Township of Tisdale. The plan was to have the plant operated jointly by the town and township, the cost to be borne in equal proportion by Timmins and Tisdale, while the Ontario Government was to be asked to pay for Mountjoy's part in the use of the incinerator. Another letter was received by the council from Mr. A. White in reference to his house which had been used by the town as an isolation hospital. Mr. White wanted the house put into proper repair and he also asked for \$100 for the use of it by the town. The council thought the demands too high and simply referred the matter to the solicitor. Council passed a by-law disqualifying those whose taxes were not paid by Dec. 14th from voting at the municipal elections that year. Councillor Longmore, chairman of the finance committee, made reference to the tax collector's work for the year. During the year, \$52,054.80 of 1919 taxes had been collected as well as \$12,005.92 from the previous year. There was \$9,754.50 of collectable taxes for 1919 still to be brought in.

The first annual Rose Ball under the auspices of the Timmins Golden Chapter of the Daughters of the Empire was held in the Masonic hall on Wednesday evening, Dec. 31st. In mentioning the prospective event, The Advance said:—"During the few months of its existence, Timmins Gold Chapter I.O.D.E. has been of very special assistance to many worthy causes in town. Among its more recent activities may be mentioned the arrangements for the civic banquet to returned soldiers, all of the details regarding the banquet, etc., being taken care of by the ladies of the I.O.D.E."

The Advance twenty years ago said:—"Mr. R. Eddleston returned to Timmins this week for a visit after several weeks spent in the Larder Lake district. Around Larder Lake, he says, there is perhaps more activity in prospecting, exploration and preliminary mining work than in any other locality in the North Land. The Larder Lake district is a big one but at present it is pretty well combed by prospectors while many of the prospects also seem to be traveling along the way to becoming mines. Mr. Eddleston believes that the Associated Goldfields will rank as one of the great low-grade gold mines of the continent. There is a lot of teaming now being done for the Associated Goldfields. They are cutting a new road through Larder Lake for the transportation of supplies, much of the work now completed. The contract for the diamond drilling of 5000 feet at the Associated Goldfields is nearly completed, and results so far are said to be very encouraging, indeed."

The Ontario Railway and Municipal Board held several sessions at South Porcupine in December, 1919, to hear the appeals of the Dome, McIntyre and other mines regarding the township's assessment of certain mine buildings. After the evidence and argument on both sides were heard the board reserved its decision. In previous years the mines had been given the benefit of a special rate of assessment on buildings, it being understood that this was the intention of the provincial act. In 1919, however, Tisdale's revised assessment materially increased the assessment on the mines, it being held that certain buildings should be assessed in the ordinary way as not coming under the special provisions of the law. At the hearing before the Municipal Board, it was even suggested that mills where certain processes were used came under the heading of chemical rather than mining processes and so were not entitled to exemption. On the other side the difficulty in drawing a line between technical distinctions was pointed out and it was further shown that in some of the mines a combination of the chemical and mechanical processes was necessary for successful mining work. If the object of the provisions of the law as made by the Legislature was to encourage mining work, then the drawing of the distinctions referred to would defeat this purpose.

New York Herald Tribune:— Finland will have the moral support of every man and woman in this country whose opinion is worth consulting. . . If the Soviet Union perpetrates any outrage upon Finland she will stand self-convicted in this nation's sight of a coldly calculated crime against human decency for which Communism will not be forgiven while two or three adherents to that sub-human cult gather together under the hammer and sickle anywhere in this world.

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Notes About War Services of the Canadian Legion

Appeal to be Made in February for \$500,000 for Legion Work Overseas.

(By F. H. Wooding,
Press Liaison Officer)

Several weeks before the grey-smoked luxury liners carrying Canada's first contingent of fighting men began their historic passage to England, Lieut.-Col. C. F. Ritchie, D.S.O., M.C., of Montreal, vice-president of The Canadian Legion War Services, began conversations in London for the establishment overseas of the Legion's new wartime organization.

Col. Ritchie sailed in advance of the first contingent to confer with Lieut.-Col. William Rae, D.S.O., the C.L.W.S. honorary representative in London, and to pave the way for the arrival of the Legion's vanguard of overseas officers.

Authorities in England and France, according to reports now reaching Ottawa, are co-operating wholeheartedly with the Legion officials. Little can be said, at the moment, of course, until more complete information is available, but it is understood that the machinery is being rapidly set up to go into operation in the near future. This machinery will enable continuance in both countries, including actual theatres of war, of the same welfare facilities being provided in Canada by the Legion such as education, personal service, entertainment, recreation huts and sports. In addition, leave hostel centres and travel bureaux will be established and there will be other auxiliary services of a more minor nature.

Pending the arrival of the overseas officers, who are attached to and will sail with the next contingent of the C.A.S.F., Col. Ritchie is maintaining close association with officials of the British Legion and the British Empire Service League, both of which are extending splendid co-operation.

The C.L.W.S. advance party is headed by A. E. "Jack" Moore, of Winnipeg, Dominion chairman of the Canadian Legion, accompanied by Captain J. W. St. Hall, mayor of St. Lambert, Que., and Captain Mert W. Plunkett, supervisor of soldier concert parties.

Announcement that the Canadian Legion War Services will make an appeal in February for \$500,000 with which to carry on its important work among the Dominion's fighting men undoubtedly will be sympathetically received by the general public. The Legion itself since 1925 has been championing the cause of veterans of the last war, and their families, and has performed notable services in rehabilitation, dependents' allowances, hospitalization, pensions and other matters pertinent to soldier problems. In its subsidiary body, the C.L.W.S., it is carrying on a work which is most eminently fitted to discharge. The new wartime organization is strictly non-profit making and was created solely for the welfare of members of Canada's naval, land and air forces.

Alex Walker, of Calgary, who is acting Dominion president of the Can-

adian Legion while Brigadier W. W. Foster is overseas, in announcing the appeal said the money will enable the Legion to provide those who have responded for service with the elements of culture, practical training and character-building to fit them for their return to civilian life.

"Experience has taught us," Mr. Walker said, "that the hardships, deprivations and sufferings of war can impoverish nations for generations to come unless far-sighted action is taken. It is to lessen these hardships and deprivations to which our young men will be subjected in the present conflict that the members of the Canadian Legion have pledged themselves in a common effort."

Another outstanding Canadian who served with distinction in the first Great War has joined the staff of The Canadian Legion War Services. He is Robert England, M.C., of Winnipeg, who has been granted leave of absence as economic advisor to the Winnipeg Electric Company to become director of overseas education for the organization. Mr. England, educationist and author, was an officer in the Royal Canadian Regiment. He will be in charge of education work to be carried out by the C.L.W.S. in collaboration with the Canadian Association for Adult Education whereby Canadians on active service will be able to continue their studies.

Mr. England has written several books dealing with education and social problems in western Canada and is well known to radio listeners as director of the broadcast series, "Ventures in Citizenship," presented last winter. His wife, incidentally, served with the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service in 1914-18 and was one of the few women to be mentioned in dispatches.

Alan Murray, one of the original members of the famous wartime troupe, the "Dumbells," also has been taken on the strength of the C.L.W.S. Alan was a song and dance rookie who made many a Canadian at the front laugh away his troubles. He has been delegated to organize concert parties among men in the Montreal area and is now holding auditions in the Black Watch and other regiments.

Brandon Sun:— A girl may wear a golf suit and never play golf, or wear a bathing suit and never go in the water, but when she puts on a wedding gown she means business!

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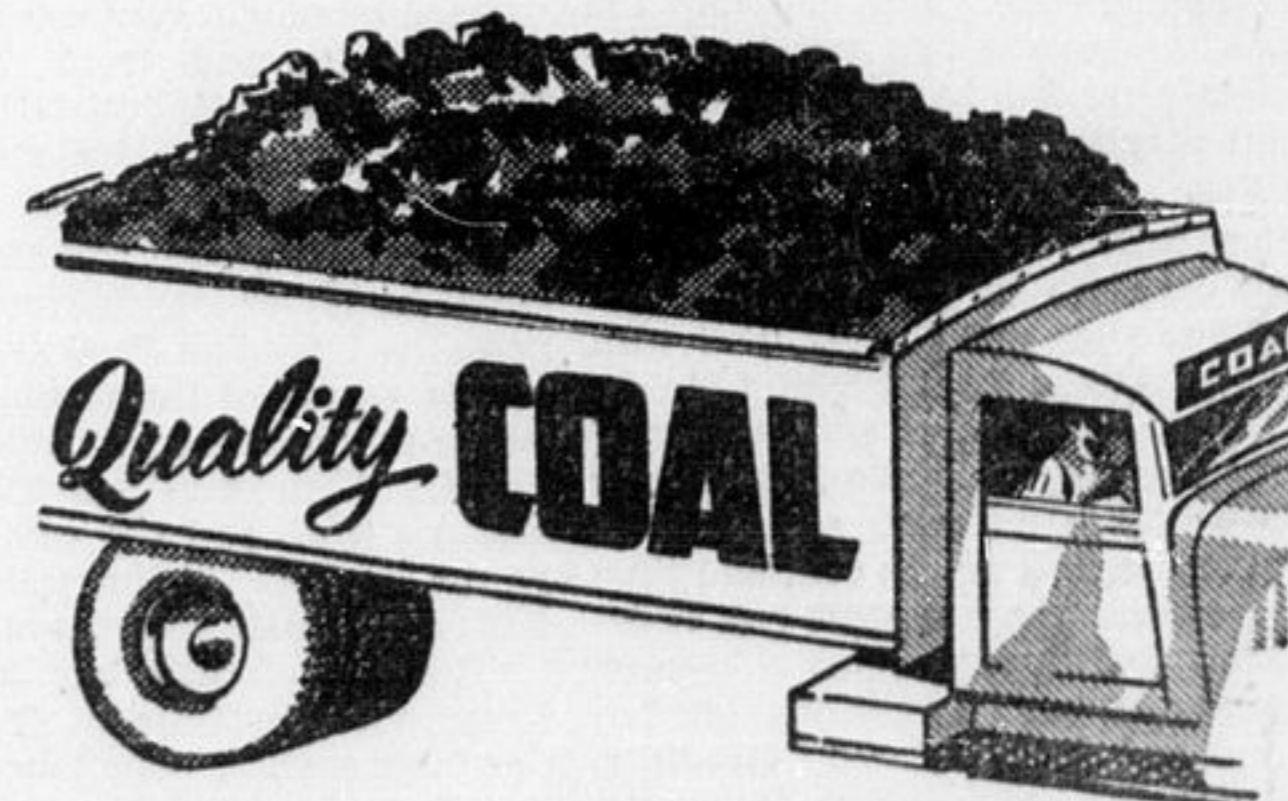
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