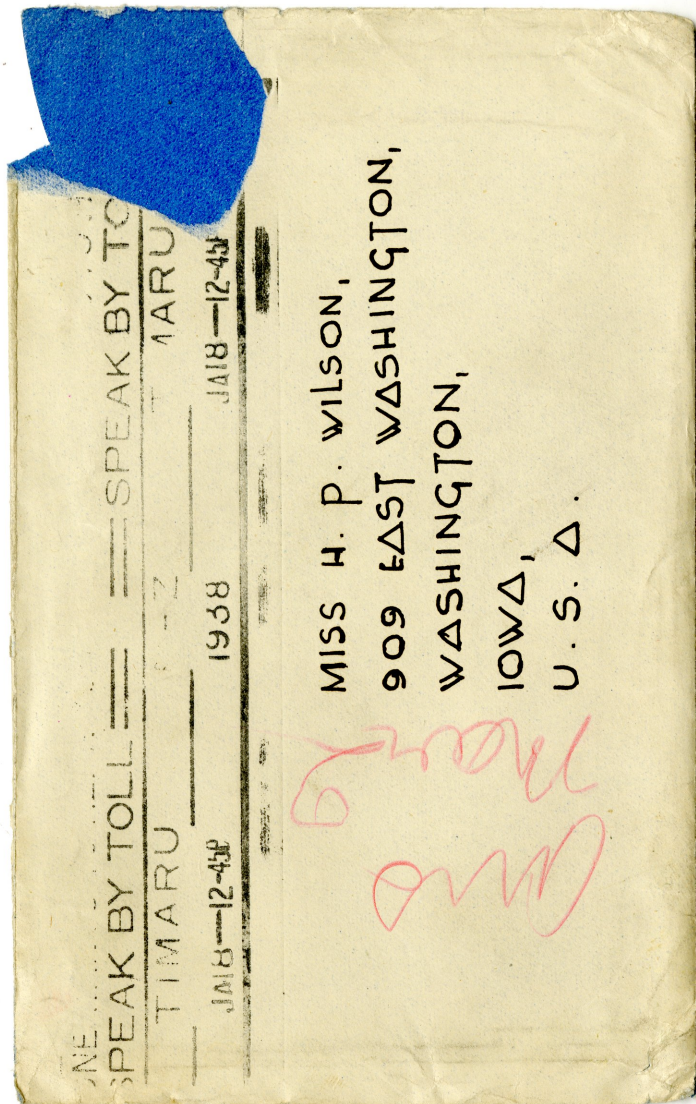


32 Banks St.,
Timaru,
New Zealand.
14th Jan. '38.

My Dear Miss Wilson,

I was much surprised and equally pleased to receive your letter. Surprised, because I had already "written you off" as a "total loss," and pleased that you hadn't considered my letter an impertinence, or something of the sort.

Many thanks for the plates you sent. Your own is a very neat piece of work. Mr. Walton handles his pen in a way that arouses considerable envy in me. I'd love to be able to draw, for instance, a tree that looked like a tree, but much experience has taught me to keep off any attempt at naturalism. What, by the way, was the printing process used for the brown copy? I thought I knew all the regular processes, but this has me puzzled. In places it has much the air of a line engraving, but there are no platemarks and the varnish-like surface is rather unusual.



The other two plates — the Lyttles — do not show the same sure hand as your own, but are ~~nevertheless~~ quite interesting.

I am enclosing two prints of my second effort — for small sections of my own post book-collection. Penny-plain for such things as Pen-drawing, Lettering, Lithography and the like; two-pence coloured for Maori Art, Commercial Art etc. (The Maoris, in case you shouldn't have heard of them, are the native inhabitants of N.Zealand. Pronounced "mow-ree", the "ow" as in "cow", or a very neat approach there-to). Of course, initials-only is considered to be "not done" by those who are supposed to be experts on the subject. My view of the matter, however, was that those who handle my books know my initials as well as — in some cases better than — they know my name. And the others would be no wiser. If I put my full name and address. The border and background patterns are two Maori art-motifs. The border from a woven design, frequently used for head-bands and the

like. The other is a painted running design which was used on such things as roof rafters. I am not satisfied with the display of the latter, as the characteristic bulb-terminations are mostly hidden beneath the letters, but dozens of trials failed to produce anything better, so, such as it is, there it is. If I can remember, and can find one, I will enclose a copy of one of our postage stamps — about 1914-24 — which shows the rafter design fairly clearly, if minutely. The Maoris had no written language but I chose the variant on Gothic as being the sort of thing, freely curved and round ended, that they would have used, if they'd had an alphabet.

I did have a vague idea of where Iowa was — and, I presume, still is. But let me return the compliment by asking "Have you any idea where New Zealand is?" Now don't say "it's part of Australia", or even "an island off the coast of Australia." Correspondence from abroad frequently arrives addressed "New Zealand, Australia," much to our disgust. In the early days of colonization, there was

NE
SPEAK BY TOLL
TIMARU
JAN-12-43

— 7 —
SPEAK BY TOLL
1ARU
JAN-12-43

1938
JAN-12-43

MISS H. P. WILSON,
909 EAST WASHINGTON,
WASHINGTON,
IOWA,
U. S. A.

Handwritten in red ink:
JAN 12 1938
JAN 12 1938

4. some talk of governing out small islands from Australia. One of our legislators settled the matter by producing a map and pointing to the 1100 miles of stormy sea separating the two. "Gentlemen," he said "there are eleven hundred good and sufficient reasons why ~~we~~ we should be a self-governing colony." So we were. And are. And anyone who adds the Dominion of New Zealand to the Commonwealth of Australia is an "ignorant foreigner." Of course, we find the general ignorance of the said "foreigners" appalling (I suppose the only thing which approaches it in magnitude is the ignorance of the average New Zealanders, concerning the rest of the world.)

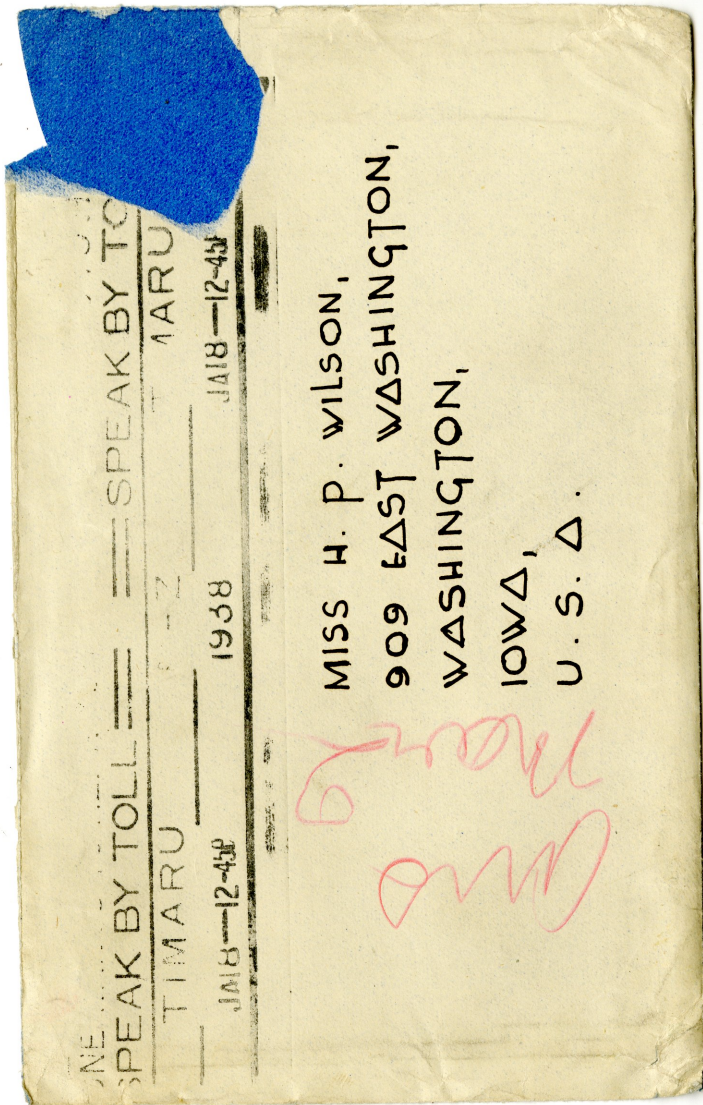
But I grow garrulous again. I must conclude on this page. If I start a new sheet I'll have it full in no time (or near off) and once I get my second wind only an Act of God can stop me.

With many thanks for your kind letter, and the enclosures, and hoping to hear from you again — some time,

I remain,

Sincerely Yours,

David P. Renton.



P.S. Sorry, but I've been re-reading your letter and find there are one or two ~~things~~ questions left unanswered. Bad luck.

I've been more or less interested in bookplates for six or seven years now; Ever since reading an article on the subject in — of all things — an American Architectural Journal. (Architecture, by the way, is my job, hence the much happier appearance of my ruled lines than free hand ones.) Since that time I have designed quite a number of plates but fortunately made no attempt to have them printed. Two years ago, when I joined the firm of Turnbull and Rule, Reg. Architects, etc., I came under the influence of Mr. P. W. Rule, (himself a bookplate "maniac" with a collection of some thousands of plates,) who suggested that I should do something more than "fiddle-around" with things. Hence the Davies plate. Hence also my membership, of about six months standing, of the New Zealand Ex Libris Society. Hence also my letter to you, as my first American correspondent. (Cheers. How proud you must be. Love hoisting from

NE SPEAK BY TOLL — SPEAK BY TOLL

1ARU

TIMARU

JAN 18-12-43

1938

JAN 18-12-43

MISS H. P. WILSON,
909 EAST WASHINGTON,
WASHINGTON,
IOWA,
U. S. A.

Handwritten in red ink:
Received
JAN 18 1938

all parts of the hall.)

I'm not sure what my total is at the moment. Something under two hundred, but it can't be very far away. Of these, however, over half were bought. Gerald Massey, a London (Eng.) dealer sent out a collection of several thousands to Mr. Rule. He chose a few and handed the parcel on to me. There were literally hundreds that I'd have liked to take, ranging in price from about 2^d to 3/6 (or approx 4s. to 80s. U.S.) but I think I did very well to confine myself to about 100. All were English plates from about 1700 A.D. to 1905 A.D. but I was more interested in the later than the earlier copies. It must be frightfully interesting, for example, to ~~the~~ trace the growth and intermarriage of the famous houses of England through the heraldry of their bookplates. (If one is interested, as I am, in Heraldry.) But it is also frightfully expensive, and struggling draftsmen have to consider their finances very carefully.

However, among those I bought were half-a-dozen ~~by~~ G.W. Eve, and a similar number by Sherborne, Nicholson and other well-known book plate

artists of the late 19th or early 20th centuries, so I was quite pleased with my little haul and did not lament the cost.

It may interest you to learn how we file out collections. (That is, how Mr. Rule files his, and how I am now copying his ideas.) All plates are first mounted, singly, on quarto size sheets of stiff paper. Actually I am using "Bank Mill, Extra Heavy" the very paper I am writing on, and the size of the full sheet un-folded. (Mr. Rule uses "Colne Valley, Super," a slightly heavier and creamier paper.) The size will take ~~any~~ plate, though some are quite large, but does not look too overpowering for a small plate properly located. There is usually sufficient room at the sides and bottom for the various cryptic pencil notes on designer, engraver, number of plate, from whom received, etc., all of which add something to the interest of the plate. (and tend to impress the uninitiated.)

In Mr. Rule's case, the plates are stuck by means of stamp-collectors' gummed hinges at the two upper corners. Personally I merely run ~~the~~ a paste brush across the

NE
SPEAK BY TOLL
TIMARU
JAN-12-48
1938
JAN-12-48
SPEAK BY TOLL
TIMARU
JAN-12-48
MISS H. P. WILSON,
909 EAST WASHINGTON,
WASHINGTON,
IOWA,
U. S. A.

top of the back, covering about the top $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, which is then stuck directly to the mount.

Once mounted, the sheets are kept in ordinary quarto box-files. The usual spring clip may be left in place, but it tends to impress its mark on the plates, in time, so we both remove the whole contraption.

The actual filing and indexing is generally a very complicated job, as plates may be filed by countries, by artists, by printing processes, chronologically, by styles, or in a dozen more different ways. In any case it is a matter which can be worked out only by one's-self, having regard to the size and character of the collection. At present I don't run to an index. I know exactly where each plate is, in my small collection. But I'll have to give the matter some consideration shortly. Probably, as is fairly usual, I will arrive at some composite system which I will fondly imagine to be an improvement on all others. One's own system always is.

But I must stop. I absolutely refuse to start a third sheet and you had no right to have encouraged me so far. (Always blame the woman" is my motto.) Anyway, if you have actually read this far, you have my sympathy. Yours, D. P. D.

NE SPEAK BY TOLL SPEAK BY TOLL
TIMARU MARU
JAN 18-12-43 1938 JAN 18-12-43

MISS H. P. WILSON,
909 EAST WASHINGTON,
WASHINGTON,
IOWA,
U. S. A.