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WALD'S SCULPTURE

WAR and a long spell of army life have not blunted the eye and hand of Herman Wald, our most gifted young sculptor. His exhibition of 39 pieces in plaster, wood, marble, cement and bronze at the Duncan Hall was worthy of a greater stage than any one city of ours could provide. Let us hope it can be arranged that it travels to the other three major cities.

War provides the artist with several of his most striking symbols. At the entrance to the show lay the giant prone figure of a helmeted soldier, face obscured, the body arched in death, one hand clutching a broken sword, the other outstretched in a last poignant groping towards a cross.

This statue of "The Unknown Warrior" is in plaster. In black marble I cannot imagine a grander, more tragic concept of the glory and sorrow of death in battle. Herman Wald sees the mystery, the horror, the farce and irony of life in terms of classical tradition. But his "Christ" is no gentle, bearded Good Shepherd. His is the Christ who suffered on the cross and knew that in his agony there was no refuge for the world from the pangs of persecution, tyranny and godlessness.

GREAT STRENGTH

Turn from the pathos of this figure to the macabre satire of "Confession," the big-thighed animalism of "De Profundis," and the wild terror of "Refugee" and you gain a wider realisation of the strength of the artist's imaginative and emotional power. "Africa" needs no footnote of mine. Executed in cement this bust, larger than life, of a woman with an elongated head coil wears the timeless "wrinkled lip and sneer" of cold subjection of a people who have bowed the back but not the spirit down the centuries from the days when the stones of the Pyramids were mounting higher.

Of all the wood carvings that called "The Witness" stands alone. Here is, to my mind, a modern classic of carving if ever there was one, executed in the most exquisitely veined willow wood.

Not since the appearance of Moses Kotler's Malay girl in the Johannesburg Art Gallery have I seen a finer piece of South

African carving.

You have to look no further than this to see that in Herman Wald we have a sculptor who can crystallize a great emotion in a curve, and give you eternity in a block of stone.