



Photo Zero

This man in a car knows his own country better than most. Having the power to overtake every moving object in sight, at incalculable miles an hour, has not robbed him of his appreciation of a quiet ride over narrow by-roads and unknown ways far from the beaten track.

Off he drives to Scotland or Wales or through Yorkshire and Northumberland—through counties with beautiful ancient names—past venerable old houses nodding in sleepy villages. And he is never on a mere "sightseeing tour".

No wonder that railway companies, seaside resorts and oil refineries have for years past continued to display posters with landscapes which he has seen from a fresh angle of vision from his vantage point behind the steering wheel. Between him and his Lancia there exists a friendship such as we sometimes find between a man and his mount.

His studio stands in the garden of his house in Abbey Road under the shade of one of the mightiest chestnut-trees in London. A friendly, quiet man is here at work, a man who is very sure of himself. He is surrounded by easels and tables full of colour tubes and rough sketches. On one wall hang reproductions of his gigantic posters, which seem twice as large in a closed room as in the open air.

His work reveals his nature plainly enough, even before one has made his personal acquaintance. His jolliest designs are full of contemplative quality and concentration and yet they are in no way heavy. His great talent as a draughtsman never betrays him into frivolities. Children, always a difficult subject, have formed the theme of some of his most successful and delightful designs. He has a boy of his own. Children are not easy models, but they are always excellent and hard-hearted critics.

Tom Purvis' posters and other work for Austin Reed have done much to bring about the success of this firm of gentlemen's outfitters. The posters are mostly painted with regard to effectiveness in the artificially-lit halls of the Underground Railway Stations. Colouring invariably very interesting and original. Forms singularly restrained and yet of an apparent careless ease. Just on this account, extremely English.