

(Continued from previous page)

that is to say an enterprise that satisfies a genuine need of the people, it will be self-supporting.

Q. Don't you think the talkies fill the bill for most people?

A. Emphatically not. Or rather, I believe that at the moment they only fill the bill because most people don't know what they are missing. The talkies are grand entertainment, and, of course, people will always go to them, but may I, very briefly, try to suggest the difference? A flesh-and-blood performance is literally for you. It is something that is recreated anew with each performance for a fresh audience. When the actor comes out from the darkness backstage on the lighted set, he is like an orator facing a crowd. Like an orator he exposes himself, and his is the tremendous task of winning an emotional response from the unseen audience that sits in judgment upon him. No two audiences are alike, and no two performances are alike. A performance is something that takes place between the player and his audience. An actor's technique must be flexible and supple, he must know how to use you as a fiddler uses his violin. He is for ever adjusting himself to your mood. He must learn how to control your laughter and your tears. He is extremely vulnerable, but when he succeeds he will give you a warmth of feeling and an intense stimulation that no canned photograph, gesticulating to an accurately-timed sound system, can ever approach. The average New Zealander who doesn't go to Repertory doesn't know this, but one visit to a good show will convince him of it. It's a cold fact that New Zealanders, under the age of 30, who have never left this country,

have also never seen an absolutely first-class flesh-and-blood play. But there is no reason why they shouldn't.

Q. But is this the time?

A. Yes, it is the very time. With the stresses and strains of four years of war bearing down upon us the filmy shadows of the cinema leave us vaguely dissatisfied. We want to be released from our tension and given new thoughts and inspiration.

### Plays for Children

Q. What about children? Do you propose to do anything for them?

A. I'm glad you mentioned that, because that is one of the things we have in mind. We hope to incorporate with the Project a group of student-actors

who, as they complete their training, will go on tour to smaller theatres or halls with plays for children. I don't mean by this that the standard of acting for children's shows need not be so high—but the plays, by their simpler character, present fewer difficulties to the young actor, and are therefore good material for his earlier appearance.

Now, this seems to be growing into a very long toll-call. Any more questions?

Q. Not just now.

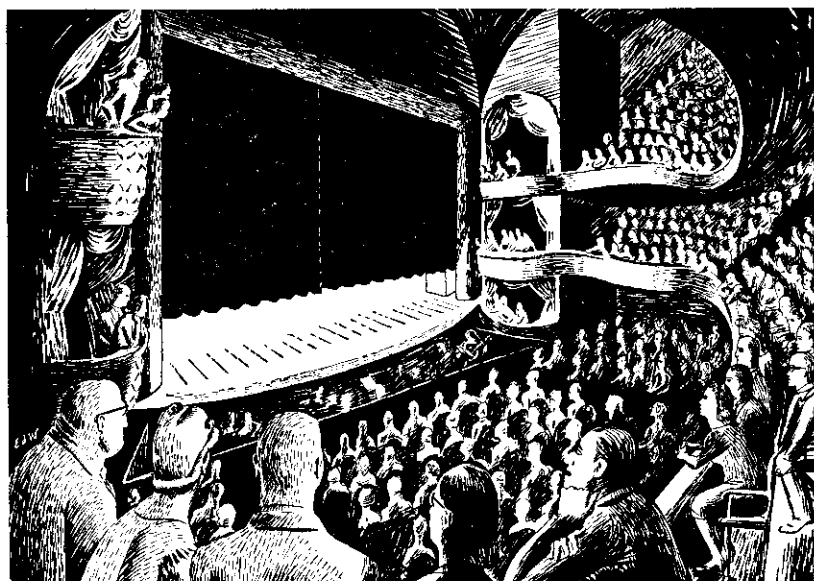
A. Good-bye then.

Good luck to the Project.

Operator's voice: "Have you completed that call?"

A. Yes, thank you.

Q. Good-bye.



"... when the house lights go out and the curtain rises. ..."

## A FURTHER CHAPTER

Dumas—Reed Collaboration

(Written for "The Listener" by PAT LAWLOR)

THERE is another chapter to T.A.M.'s article on Frank Reed, of Whangarei, and his famous Dumas collection. Few people in this country are aware that Mr. Reed has played a prominent part in two Dumas translations that have a particular interest for New Zealand.

In 1937 there was published in London a book entitled *The Whalers*, which was described on the jacket as "a vivid and exciting story of adventure and exploration in New Zealand waters from 1837 to 1846." The joint authors were Dr. Felix Maynard and Alexandre Dumas. The translator was Frank Reed, of Whangarei. To complete the New Zealand association, the introduction and notes were by Johannes C. Andersen. For some strange reason few copies of the book were sold in this country, even though it ran into two editions. Certainly, if it were available to-day, it would sell by the hundreds, for *The Whalers* is a fascinating book. Dr. Maynard was the surgeon of a French whaler visiting New Zealand in the 'thirties and 'forties of last century, and the story of his adventures is full of colour and excitement.

The second part of this extra Dumas-Reed chapter occurs in March, 1944,

with the arrival in this country of three copies only of *The Journal of Madame Giovanni*, by Alexandre Dumas, with a foreword by Frank Reed. *The Journal* has been translated into English for the first time and much of it concerns the early days in New Zealand. In format and typography the book is a most appealing volume for the bibliophile; four hundred pages with a striking jacket and cloth cover in brilliant red and gold. One could tell at a glance that the book had been published in America, where apparently war-time economy in book production is not as yet obligatory on publishers.

The imprint on the Giovanni Journal is that of the Liveright Publishing Corporation of New York, who appear to specialise in publications as far apart as Boccaccio and St. Augustine.

I have made inquiries to see whether *The Journal of Madame Giovanni* is to be made available to New Zealand readers, but so far the publishers (as appeared to happen in the case of *The Whalers*) have not realised that on a basis of population this country is one of the biggest book buyers in the world. Conceivably these oversea publishers, having dipped into the Dumas-Reed collaborations, and having read of the Maoris, wild whalers and wars, decided that we are not as yet sufficiently civi-

lised to be trusted with more than a few copies of their publications.

### Madame's Eventful Journey

However, we must secure supplies of Madame Giovanni's Journal somehow, for it is well worth reading. Madame was a young and beautiful Frenchwoman who in the 1850's journeyed with her husband (one of the wildest speculators one could imagine) to New Zealand. They landed in Auckland (which was, apparently, as lively those days as it is in 1944). The pictures conveyed through the Journal are at times delightfully naive—very different from the nauseating revelations to be found in some of our modern diaries. The Dumas imagination is working quaintly all the time but is not wholly divorced from fact. Madame travels to Hobart, to Tahiti (where she meets Queen Pomare), to San Francisco (which proves an underwriter's nightmare), to Hawaii, and to Mexico. As a contrast to the stark realism of the modern writer, the Journal makes most refreshing reading. Already it has received remarkable notices in America, including a two-page review in *Time*. The *New York Times* describes it as "a more engaging and imaginative travelling companion than Captain Cook, Livingstone, and Frank Buck put together," which is high praise indeed.

The translator, Marguerite Eyer Wilbur, pays tribute in her introduction to the assistance given to her in her work by Mr. Reed, and also by John Barr, of Auckland. Both of these gentlemen have copies of the new book and I, who have done nothing but write these few lines, feel exceedingly fortunate in possessing the third copy.



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