



GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY

(Written for
"The Listener"
by A.S.G.)

SERVING on a jury, though it may not greatly increase your fortune (you get 13/4 per day, less tax), provides a good deal of interest for the student of human nature. These are some of my impressions after one week at the Supreme Court. After having been sworn in, you retire to the well of the court until your name is called. And if it is (the Registrar calls the names as he draws them from a kind of ballot-box) you still may not sit on that case. Either counsel has the right to challenge you "as you go up to but before you take" your seat. Sometimes as many as 20 names are called before the 12 good men and true are obtained. Many are called but few are chosen! Those challenged, or not called, are directed to the smaller court-room as I was on this occasion. Here I was soon caught.

Ours was a case for compensation and damages. Evidence and addresses by Judge and counsel occupied the best part of two days, after which we were directed up a flight of narrow stairs into a small stuffy room. Chairs were scattered round a large table upon which was a jug of water, writing materials, and numerous ash-trays. Everyone smoked.

How Much?

Having agreed, after a brief discussion, that negligence had been established against the defendant, our next

duty was to assess damages. This provoked a heated argument, something like a financial debate in the House of Representatives. Some suggested awarding the full amount, others between half and three-quarters. "We've got to be just and fair, and damned 'ard, too," declared a chubby red-faced man, helping himself to a glass of water. "What I've always said . . ."

Well, you know what the "always says" always say; and he certainly did. He condemned all those who agreed to anything less than was claimed. "I've always been for the workers myself. I don't begrudge a feller a few bob . . ."

"But," urged the foreman, tactfully, "aren't we getting away from our business, friend?" That seemed to soothe him. He gulped his water noisily, and remained silent.

Nearly everyone had something to say. But we were no nearer a decision. "We've been sworn at, remember," cautioned a blue-eyed son of Eire. "Sworn in," chorused the others, amid laughter. "But we will be sworn at, if we don't reach a decision soon," interjected the foreman. "Or swearing at each other," someone suggested.

Ebb and Flow

Nerves became frayed. Arguments were restated with a force that would have done credit to a suffragette. "But can't you see?" was heard for the tenth time. "No" was invariably the answer. "What I think is," began another. But everyone knew. It had been heard at least a dozen times before. And so the battle ebbed and flowed, until a hand



would thunder on the table. "Gentlemen!" But the call was unheard. "In this game we must . . ."

"It ain't a game," snapped a youngish fellow on my right. "Well, I hope it isn't a war," retorted another. But at times it seemed as if it might quite easily develop into one.

A Solution at Last

More than an hour had passed. It promised to be an all-night sitting. Some of us looked despairingly at the foreman who was now denouncing State Control in general and Manpower officers in particular to all who cared to listen. Someone told a story. Everyone laughed. At last we were on common ground. Then someone had a bright idea. "Now, gentlemen," he began, "since agreement seems impossible, suppose we each write down an amount; then add them together and divide by 12! That will give us each a fair say." This was agreed upon. "But don't look at me," grinned the foreman, when it was suggested that he should work out the amount, "I'm no scholar!" But the task was done. At last we had reached a verdict. My first case was over.

Ridiculous, of course. But was it? We did what we were asked to do—gave the subject the most earnest consideration of which we were capable. If our capabilities were not high, does that matter? It was justice, I am sure, by the injured man's peers.

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worked with him will remain uninfluenced by his high ideals. The aim of the music-making in this school is not to pick and choose the instrumentalists for an orchestra, and to select small gifted choral groups for public performance, but to get every pupil in the school without exception to learn some sort of instrument or to sing in the choir. Instead of making his less talented pupils feel inferior by ignoring them, Dr. Griffiths found time to write special parts for them, within their learners' capabilities but none the less effective. He wrote multi-part settings of well-known tunes and trained his hundreds of singers to perform them entirely without music. His untiring work in the cause of school music, and the excellent example of his successor, Frank Callaway, have borne remarkable fruit; for music has become not a special subject rather remote from ordinary study, but an intrinsic part of school life, and an influence for the raising of public taste.

Music While You Listen

LISTENING to "Music While You Work" from 4YA I reflected that such a session is the thin edge of the wedge of inattention. The insinuation that you may do something else while listening is a bad one; it may be carried over to programmes containing the best

music, and listeners are inclined to regard time as wasted if it is spent in merely listening, without an accompaniment of activity such as pipe-cleaning, wool-winding, wood-whittling, hair-washing, or even surreptitious novel-reading and apple-chewing. Indeed, the title of



most evening programmes might well be "Music While You Fiddle About." Eric Blom in a critical essay suggests that there is only one thing that may occupy your hands when music is being performed—namely, the score of the work itself. Since score-owners here in New Zealand are confined to an esoteric band who rightly refuse to allow the precious things out of their sight, let's endeavour without their help to make certain that only one title will apply to any radio programme, "Music While You Listen."

Great Scott

ONE usually regards dramatisation of the lives of the late great with extreme caution, since writers and producers so rarely seem to share one's imaginative view; but a feature broadcast recently by 3YL, entitled "The Author of Waverley," certainly broke down the barriers. In technical skill alone, telling its story largely by soliloquy, with dialogue faded in and out with amazing fitness, it was sky-scrapingly above the average. It achieved the incredible feat of telling a story in exceedingly broad Scots, without a single skirl, a single facetiousness, or a single teardrop, and making it authentic, exciting, and affecting. To one who is neither Scot nor Scott-lover (except at a considerable distance this side idolatry) this story of Scott's struggle against financial failure proves just how much can be done with radio drama under intelligent direction, and indeed counts as the best ever in its class. Genuine local colour and vocabulary have, when properly employed (very rare it is), a considerable power of entertaining and exciting. My one regret is that we do not hear the voice of Dugald Dalgetty, the only Scott character (I find) admired by schoolboys—and how right they are.

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