

1945

"VICTORY," we said a year ago, "is on the way." It is still on the way, and we have no words to eat or retract. But it would be dishonest to pretend that it is as near now as we expected it to be when we wrote that sentence. It may be closer than the latest news suggests, but most people expected a year ago that it would be here now (including General Eisenhower and Field-Marshal Montgomery). We shall not pretend that we knew better than the generals, or saw in 1943 what other people are only beginning to see this week. It is not a good war for prophets, and we are not anxious to join their ranks; but it is easier to endure prophets than pessimists. Our armies have had a severe reverse west of the Rhine, and it is cowardice to try to explain it away. Events have taken a most painful turn in Greece, and it would be equally stupid to gloss that over. But the crowning folly is to see those shadows and nothing else. The reverse on the Rhine may or may not have delayed the end of the war by months: at present no one knows, since no one on the German side knows how heavily the Americans can hit back, and no one on the Allied side knows what the counter-attack is costing Germany in reserve material and men. The upheaval in Greece may have died down before this sentence is dry or may spread and grow: again we have not the facts for a judgment. But the overriding fact is that reverse and upheaval are mere incidents in relation to the general march of events. We are still winning the war and making gigantic preparations for securing the peace. Throughout 1944 events have moved steadily in one direction, and there is no suggestion anywhere that the direction will change in 1945. "On the way" is our way, not the enemy's. It is the way in which all those things lie for which, with all our failures and false steps, we are still fighting. Pessimism has about the same foundation in such circumstances as the phobias that prevent some people from crossing the street and others from going to sleep in the dark.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

FOR SUNDAY NIGHT

Sir,—I would like to congratulate and support "Youth," of Rotorua, whose letter on sacred music appeared recently in your columns. It is my opinion that 95 per cent of the people are hungry for sacred music, and especially on a Sunday evening. Why are we deprived of the sacred gems of the music masters? With the sacred season of Christmas ahead, let us have a little of what we crave.—"MUM AND DAD" (Raumati Beach).

ACTS OF DANCING

Sir,—Concerning the article "Acts of Dancing," the question is asked why should it be forbidden. Here are some quotations which cannot be denied. John Carrard, an American evangelist, says: "It (dancing) endangers health of body, virtue of soul, and efficiency of mind. . . . Dance half the night and sleep half the day is the programme of modern youth. Nothing but evil can come from such a corrupt and demoralising state of society." A bishop of the Methodist Church says: "Passion—passion, and nothing else, is the basis of the dance."

Your Youth Worker stated that dancing is about the only way boys and girls can meet socially. I say that such men should be utterly ashamed of themselves if all they can offer youth is the degrading, lustful pleasure of the modern dance. Such people are not working for but against youth, for the tendency of this amusement is always to create a distaste for mental application and honest work in those who love them, to make idle, frivolous, and brainless men and women.

What are we here for, anyway? To be slaves of pleasure? No. We are here to build character and citizenship. What possibilities are to be found in the soul of our New Zealand youth who hold the destiny of our country with them? If the ideals of the pioneer are to be forgotten, then disintegration will set in. I suggest that the Youth Worker spend his time on teaching the values of Art, which brings out the best in us and provides us with a pastime which gives greater spiritual communion and intellectual fellowship and demands more courtesy than any dance hall. One only need ask a musician to be satisfied on that point.

Fathers and mothers, what will your answer be when God asks where your children are?—"EYE WITNESS" (Waimate).

[We print this letter to show why we cannot open our columns for a general discussion; though "Youth Worker" may, if he wishes, reply briefly.—Ed.]

THE ADVERTISING OF FILMS

Sir,—Some time ago, G.M. was speculating on some film advertisements which proclaimed, with curious insistence, "NOT a War Film," even when this was not the case. May I offer an explanation?

If you closely examine newspaper advertisements of American films over a period, you will find, quite simply, that they are written for American audiences. Continual references are made to Our Navy, Our Marines, Our Heroes, when these admirable bodies are actually the property not of the New Zealand people,

but of the American. This is, at best, a trying and mystifying habit — Christchurch at the moment is deluged in references to The Sullivans, and no one knows who they are; but worse has resulted. According to *Time*, box-office results in the U.S. show a definite swing away from war films, which is mirrored in the tone of exhibitors' advertisements, which in turn are reduplicated in New Zealand; the giant brains of Hollywood evidently assuming that because Americans are tired of war films, New Zealanders are in the same case.

In short, New Zealand, whose intellectuals have for years been lamenting her excessive cultural dependence on England, is treated by the Hollywood potentates as a part of the United States, with less cultural autonomy than Arkansas; a not very pleasant irony.—J. G. A. POCOCK (Christchurch).

MAORIS AND RADIO

Sir,—I was very much interested in a *Listener* interview—"When the Maoris Come Home Again." I would like to make the suggestion that a radio station be made available, especially for the Maoris of New Zealand, to be managed by a Maori. I think you will agree that this is not before time. Perhaps when our friends the Americans leave our shores 12M could be handed over to the Maoris as a gesture of remembrance of the noble deeds of the Maori Battalion. In the interests of New Zealand. I hope this matter will have some thought.—STANLEY DEVERELL (Kati Kati).

RADIO SERIALS.

Sir,—I am quite in accord with the letter in your issue signed "Thrillers First." It seems rather absurd that so many listeners (including myself) should be deprived of serials because some parents have no control over their children. There are items on most programmes that do not appeal to me, but I do not insist that the NBS remove them.

The Phantom Drummer and *The Laughing Man* were old friends: the latter I read at the age of 12, also most of Victor Hugo's other books, by direction of my father. More harm is done by the mawkish sickly sentimental type of serial than by a good thriller. At one

time it was "Deadwood Dick" who was sending the youth of the country to perdition. Then it was the cinema. Now it is radio. But it is none of these: lack of parental control is the chief trouble. I am on night duty, and every morning in the early hours (Sunday as well) there are young girls walking the streets and being noisy and ill-behaved.

"THRILLER FAN" (Christchurch).

Sir,—I heartily agree with "Thrillers First" of Auckland. If certain programmes were put on early parents would not object to the children listening. In the evening, after having done their homework, to sit down and glue their eyes to a book again, even if it is fiction, is not always what children call recreation. They look forward to radio serials (thriller and otherwise) as their evening entertainment, just as they do to Saturday afternoon pictures. Parents, I am sure, would much rather have their child listen to thrillers on the air each evening than have them going to the cinema each evening to see a thriller. One more thing: the feature *Their Finest Hour* is one to warm everyone's heart. Could it not be put on at a more appropriate time? Nine o'clock may not seem late, but for a half-hour serial half-past nine is late for workers who start early next morning.

"WISE OWL" (Wellington).

ST. ANTHONY'S CURSE

Sir,—Station 1YX seems to have no luck at all with Brahms' Variations on a Theme by Haydn. On July 4 it was broadcast only to be interrupted by the 9 o'clock chimes when but three-quarters finished. Since then this station has avoided these mishaps by giving the longer works plenty of elbow-room, and keeping in reserve something brief to be slipped in if there is a spare moment before the chimes. On December 5 the Variations (beginning so far as I was concerned at Variation 3) finished in comfortable time, and we had Handel's Arietta to fill in; but it was not until I heard the Arietta for the second time in 15 minutes, that I knew the identity of the work that had insinuated itself into the place of the Theme and Variations I. and II. Only a few weeks ago, 1YA managed to play the Theme and Variations right through in their true order without a hitch, so it is apparent that the curse is directed specifically against 1YX.—SWINEHERD (Auckland).

DON'T MISS THE START

South American Journey Begins in a Fortnight

WE have already told our readers that they may see South America for 3d a week. It is not bluff or sales talk, but journalistic truth; only they must be there when the journey starts. It will start in a fortnight.

So give your orders to your newsgents if you get your "Listeners" that way. Send them to us if you prefer direct service, but don't fail to make yourself safe one way or another. Country subscribers will perhaps find it most convenient to place their orders through the Post Office. Don't forget that every Money Order office is our agent.

But above all, don't wait until the story has run three or four issues and then write asking for back numbers. We shall not be able to supply them.

Remember—a journey through the wilds of South America, mistaken but exciting, for the cost every week of three smokes. Final announcement next issue.