

JUNE 1, 1945

## Death of a New Zealander

**B**Y accident a tribute in verse in our last issue by J. C. Beaglehole is duplicated in prose in this issue by Mary Scott: the kind of accident we do not regret. In both cases the theme is the age-old piteousness of the death of those we can least spare—the brilliant and young who are also modest and wise. That, wherever it happens, is tragedy, and while it was coincidence that two people so widely separated in thought as well as in space should have written simultaneously to us, it was not coincidence that they should have used the same language. For we are a special case in New Zealand where talent is concerned, being the remotest and loneliest of all civilised communities. We can't afford to lose one man or one woman in whom ability is outstanding, whether it is literary ability or scientific. We have used up the mental and moral impulses that came to us from Britain during our first 50 years and must now live on our own brain-stuff. Health certainly comes first—cleanness and wholesomeness of body and of being; and in that we are fortunate. But it is not enough to have the material for a dull and flat decency. We require the inspiration of high intelligence, and a light goes out as often as a brilliant man dies. In this case the light was very steady and very bright and the loss correspondingly depressing. If we were twenty million, or ten even, instead of less than two, we could take these blows without being downcast by them: one lamp less would not mean near darkness: but one lamp gone in so few leaves a shadow that everybody can feel. For we can't fix a time for replacement. Talent can neither be found by looking for it nor, when found, forced. The most we can do is treasure it when it comes, and pay for it, and that calls for imagination as well as courage. Instead of agreeing that we can't pay the price offered by bigger and richer countries we should realise that we can't afford not to pay it—and a little more.

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

### ANNOUNCERS' ERRORS

Sir,—I have made no slip about "O Filii et Filiae" as your Music Department seems to think in your footnote to my letter. Sir Walford Davies did not compose this work. The announcer said "by Davies." Davies may have written a harmony to the tune or air, as many other people have done—e.g., E. W. Goldsmith and S. Webbe in his "Motetts and Antiphons" (1792). The point is that Davies is not the composer of "O Filii et Filiae," but merely an arranger or harmoniser. If the announcer had said "arranged by Davies," I would have found no fault with him.

H. H. FOUNTAIN (New Brighton).

[The Music Department makes this further comment: "In his first letter the Rev. H. H. Fountain said that Sir Walford Davies merely conducted the St. George's Chapel Choir in 'O Filii et Filiae.' This is not only misleading, but does less than justice to a great church composer. Davies did far more than that. If arrangers and users of traditional tunes are to be particularised, the NBS will have to besprinkle future broadcasts of major works with explanatory notes upon all those parts which (as Mr. Fountain probably knows) were never actually the invention of Bach, Handel, Wagner, Sullivan, Tchaikovsky, and numerous others. This would be pedantry run mad."] ]

### UNTIDY SCHOOL CHILDREN

Sir,—Recently the Town Hall in one of our large centres was loaned for less than an hour to some two hundred boys and girls from High and Technical schools in the city. The litter of ice cream cartons, paper, and other rubbish was surprising. Naturally the janitors asked why. Surely our children should be taught that cleanliness and respect are expected of them as a matter of common courtesy, and that no place, whether publicly or privately owned, should be so treated. Placing feet on railway seats by school children is another matter to be deplored, but no one seems to have the time or authority to deal with it.

1898 CLASS (Hutt Valley).

### BREAD

Sir,—I read with interest your article on "Bread." If New Zealand grows 80 to 90 per cent. of wheat required, I think with reasonable care that could be made into 100 per cent. Even during these war years I have many times been astounded at the amount of bread thrown out to dogs and fowls. It might be said that fowls must have something; yes, but why trouble the miller and the baker when it could be given as wheat? I have seen whole loaves thrown out because they were a bit stale. I watched one woman throw out a 4lb. loaf and then make scones! I am acquainted with a woman whose work takes her into many homes and she asserts that in nine out of ten homes crusts are thrown out. We must be well off in New Zealand. I would like to disagree when you say that New Zealand flour makes bread equal to flour which is reinforced by a percentage of Australian flour. I made bread for eight years, which was considered by many to be very good, but for years now it does not make the grade. Perhaps my hand has lost its cunning. Has any other home bread-maker had similar results?

M.J. (Stratford).

Sir,—I am full of appreciation for your leading article entitled "Bread" and am writing to congratulate you on it.

For a townsman to place the position so fairly, and not to place all the blame on the farmer, is really refreshing, and I am sure that every man on the land will support my opinion.

However, there are weaknesses in your article that I would like to point out to you. It is easy to say that the farmer "could and should grow enough wheat for our own use, that it has been done, and we should do it again." But the position is altogether different to-day, and I might say at once that there is no possibility of the goal of 300,000 acres or even 250,000 being grown under present conditions. Here are some reasons: We have to grow 40,000 acres

### LIFE IN BRITAIN

NELLE SCANLAN, the New Zealand novelist, who has made many broadcasts for the NBS, left for England a few months ago to do various types of news-gathering and research work. She has also been commissioned by the NBS to write on life in Britain as she sees it after six years of war. Her letters will be broadcast from the main stations.

The first of the letters will be heard from 2YA at 10.25 a.m. on Monday, June 4.

of barley for pig feed, and a great deal extra for malting; thousands of acres of linen flax, hundreds of acres of oats for oatmeal, and thousands of extra acres of potatoes, peas, turnips, rape and kale seed, and other small seeds. Almost all of these crops are grown on wheat land.

You say that a farmer grows a crop that pays him best. I agree that as a general rule he has to; but in my district lots of farmers for four years have grown wheat from a patriotic urge. I am one of them, but I must say we are getting tired of it. Another reason why we cannot grow the quantity is lack of manpower; it takes a lot more work to prepare the land and sow it than to harvest the crop. Would you believe me when I say that within a mile or so of my farm there are at least six farms with only one man on them and he around about 70 years of age.

All the same, as a working farmer, my heart warmed towards you when I read your article, "Bread." Thank you very much.

H. S. SHEAT (Shag Point).

### NAMES BEFORE AND AFTER

Sir,—I would like to see reinstated in the New Zealand broadcasting system the old method of announcing the title of a record after it is played. I have heard it done at times, but it does not seem to be the rule. This style of announcing appears to be the habit with other broadcasting systems such as the BBC and the ABC, and I think it is an excellent method. I am sure there are numerous listeners who are not familiar with the names of many of the works played (this applies to all types of music), although they know the actual melody. It gives great satisfaction to be able to place a piece of music, especially for future reference. Besides, music lovers are always adding to their repertoire, as they hear new works which

attract notice. Naturally what I have written does not apply to the programmes published in *The Listener*, but only to what appear to be impromptu sessions.—PATIENCE (Te Awamutu).

### FARMERS AND OTHERS

Sir,—Fancy anyone writing under such a nom-de-plume as "Accountant" and doubting that the farmers are the base on which all other sections of the community rest. The farmer—the primary producer. Is that not sufficient evidence? Is "Accountant" so juvenile that he does not remember our last slump, when the price of primary produce fell, and the whole country came to earth with a thud? And as for the farmer's return to a "Robinson Crusoe" existence, well, he has done it before, and would do it again. Indeed, he might have to for a while if our sectional structure gets too top-heavy for its base, and crashes. How much more interesting and happy to exist a la Robinson Crusoe than a la mistletoe.

C. Y. NICKEL (Paerau).

### MAORI PRONUNCIATION

Sir,—I was pleased to see the letter of Kia Tiki about the mispronunciation of Maori by the announcers. Two or three years ago, at the time of the floods in the Eketahuna district, the announcer murdered every Maori place-name he read. I wrote in protest and received a letter from the Director of Broadcasting, saying that it was not possible to take the matter up in war-time. Meanwhile Wairarapa becomes wirer-rapper; Eketahuna is Eketahoouer; Pahiatua Pahiatooer and so on. Try announcing then with each syllable of equal accent and the letter A pronouncer like Ah, and you will find Maori one of the most euphonious languages in being.

EPHESUS (Otaki).

### MUSIC AND PILLS

Sir,—Your "Music and Pills" article was much appreciated. I wonder how many of your readers would remember Beechams' Music Portfolios published in the early eighties, each containing about 20 items, Pianoforte Solos, Songs, Duets, etc., and retailed at 2d each. From memory I think there were about 20 volumes issued, pages about 6in. x 5in., and very clear and accurate print. By a boy of working class parentage, these were much appreciated, and spare coppers in those days went to buy new copies. Such old favourites as "Drink To Me Only," "Tom Bowling," "Sally in our Alley," "Lass of Richmond Hill," "When Other Lips," etc., were among the song selections in the earliest of these volumes, and I distinctly remember "one fingering" out the air on the old harmonium, and, as a boy soprano singing many of these at public concerts in my home town and district.

It is really no exaggeration to say that this was really the basis of my education in music and when I say that I have held paid positions as Tenor Soloist at English Churches and sung Tenor roles in several Oratorios and was one of the first to broadcast in New Zealand, this is a sincere appreciation of the earlier Beechams, who not only introduced the Pills, but the Music Portfolio at so low a price. OLD-TIMER (Wellington).