

was addressed by Bishop Gore, who spoke a few words that should never be forgotten by those who believe in popular government. "All this passion for justice," said the bishop, "will accomplish nothing, unless you get knowledge. You may become strong and clamorous, you may win a victory, you may effect a revolution; but you will be trodden down again under the feet of knowledge, unless you get it for yourselves. . . ." No truer words were ever said. It is to be hoped that we may take them to heart in New Zealand before it is too late.

This is a very useful book and we ought to be grateful to Mr. Thompson for the great trouble he has taken; but I wish it were easier to read and only half as long. We are a long-winded people and the way things are going it looks as if it may end in everybody writing books and only reviewers reading them.

#### NEW MUSIC

FOUR PRELUDES FOR PIANO, by Douglas Lilburn. Caxton Press.

NEW serious music, unlike new verse, does not arrive from local publishing houses in such quantity as to oppress the reviewer. It ought to, and doubtless it would if we expected it to; but we do not expect it, and great is our loss. There came through the post the other day one slim folio. In black lettering on an impeccable grey cover I read "Four Preludes for Piano—Douglas Lilburn"; inside was the name of the Caxton Press, the year 1945, and no word more. The rarity of the occasion brought with it an embarrassment as heavy as a whole truckload of books, because I have listened to Mr. Lilburn's music when occasional chances have come through broadcasts and recitals, have grown fond of it and hoped that some might be published because I have admired the work of the Caxton Press and am delighted to see that they make as good a job of their first printing of music as they have done with volumes of prose and verse; and because here is music that has been made only a few hundred miles away instead of at the other side of the world. Yet the publishers have refrained from drawing attention to these aspects of the matter, and for the reviewer to be showing less composure than the publishers seems to put the whole thing on an improper footing right at the outset.

There is the further difficulty that Mr. Lilburn is a New Zealander. He lives in Christchurch and has chosen the profession of writing serious music; this makes him conspicuous and us self-conscious. We would so gladly have him succeed. Will we too readily believe that he is doing so? I try to wipe my mind free of eagerness and bias, to leave it blank to receive the impression of the music itself. I must not know what I think till I hear what I play.

At the instrument the notes lie happily under the fingers, bringing that strangely satisfying sense that this is indeed music for the piano. The first prelude only is not new to me; it was published last year in the Lady Newall Gift Book and has worn well. The eye may question the necessity of tackling its unusual key of F sharp major, or the E flat minor of the fourth prelude, but the fingers at once recognise their rightness. Next I give thanks that Mr. Lilburn's form of expression has not led him into paths where only a few pianists are technically equipped to follow him.

Musically these preludes are exacting, as anything is that is worth playing; technically they are within reach of most of us. This means that they can, and I hope they will, be used also in the teaching studio. If adolescents are what they were in my day, their preludial ambitions will be centred mainly on Rachmaninoff in C sharp minor, but they may profitably explore other moods and other ways of conquering the piano than taking it by storm. There are composers who can call forth the intimate spirit of the instrument with a few gentle and well-chosen notes. Mr. Lilburn's notes are very few, and they are very well chosen.

Gentleness, quietude, and understatement are qualities that we turn to nowadays with relief, but they are not in themselves enough to make music that lives. Charm and originality must capture our attention; balance and strength added to these will hold it. That these preludes have distinction and individuality is clear in the first few minutes, and as the days go by I become more sure about their qualities of endurance.

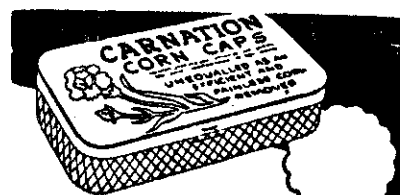
—D.F.T.

### "Monty" Visits Wellington

"MONTY" visited Wellington recently on a troopship. The familiar and much-photographed beret was missing but "Monty" was unmistakable and the principal figure in much leave-taking as the troops left the vessel. There were farewell gifts from officers and other ranks and much advice about health.

For three years "Monty" has been part and parcel of the ship, having travelled many thousands of miles since leaving the home town of Bristol. "Monty" has seen action too, being in a gun-nest when trouble occurred. A slight dose of shellshock resulted. And what is more, "Monty" had chosen the gun-nest in which to produce a family.

Once again "Monty" is expecting. This widely-experienced ship's cat will be able to produce her next family in the peace and quiet of friendly waters. But she has the crew guessing. They don't know if the new progeny will be Kiwis or Aussies.

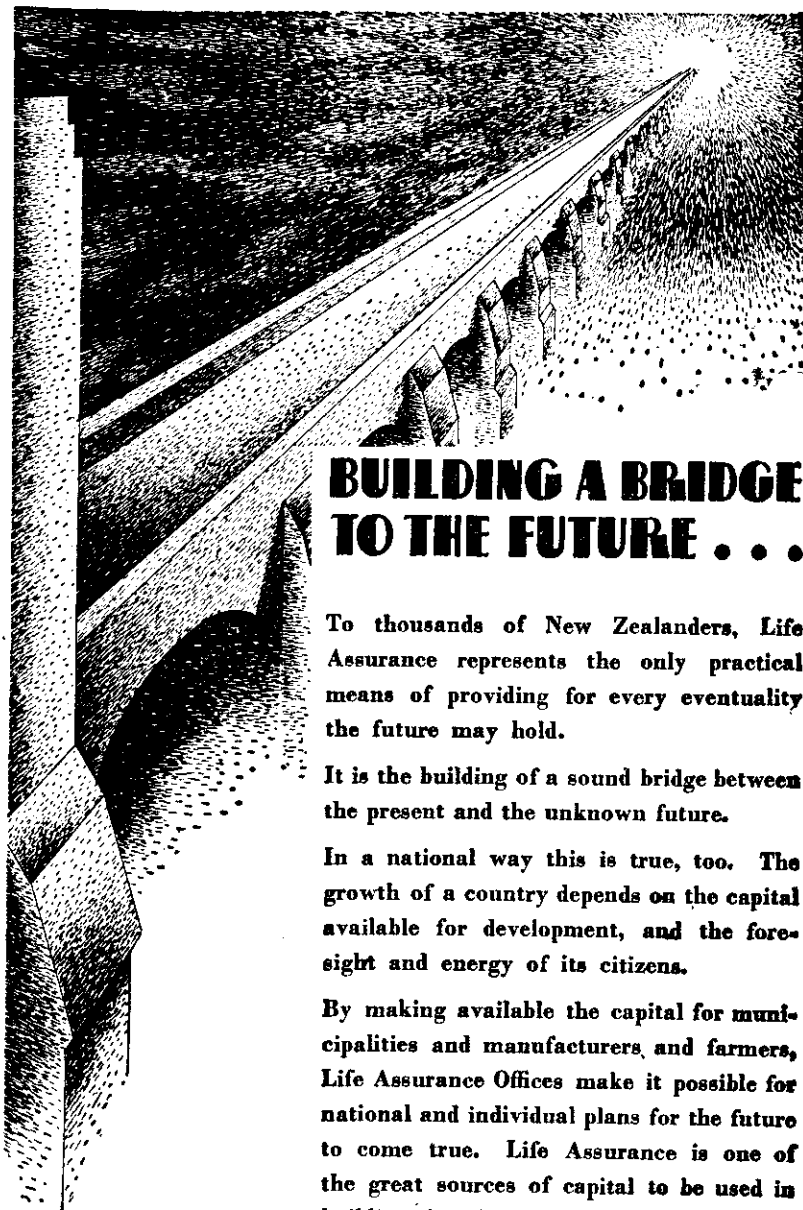


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