

JULY 27, 1945

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A Race With Winter

IF men never bit dogs it would be a hard world for journalists. And if conquerors did nothing but conquer it would be a horrible business writing history. But men at intervals do behave in such an extraordinary way that their aberrations make news, and that is why UNRRA is news. UNRRA is the human race behaving as it has never behaved before. Nations have often enough blotted one another out. They have occasionally pitied their victims, and very occasionally forgiven them. But UNRRA is a rescue race on a world scale. Although Germany is at present outside its operations, a no-man's-land charitably as well as politically, 44 nations are rushing to the relief of the rest of Europe with much of the speed and urgency and fore-planned thoroughness of a military assault. It is an altogether unprecedented situation in world affairs; not merely novel but sensational; and it will be months yet before we see clearly what is happening. But in four months, or five in the most favoured countries, the European winter will have arrived, and the immediate anxiety of UNRRA is to get enough serviceable clothing into Europe to give its millions of "statistically naked" people a chance to survive the cold. That is why UNRRA appeals are going so continuously over the air. That is why CORSO, its New Zealand auxiliary, is asking and going on asking from people who have already given generously. It is why all the military and political friction stories still filling space in the newspapers are of no significance at all in the presence of this grim shadow of hunger and cold. And it is why everybody, no matter how bare he may think his wardrobe already is, should look at it again next week to see whether there is not something else to which some unfortunate man, woman or child somewhere has not a better claim. It has never been more true that giving promptly is giving twice.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

PARLIAMENT AND THE PROGRAMMES

Sir,—I, for one, disagree with the suggestion that either the 2YA or the 2YD programme should be cancelled instead of the 2YC programme, during the meeting of Parliament. Even though "Anti-Bing" and others are lovers of classical music, there are those who like to listen to the 2YD serials, which by the by are not as trivial as he seems to think, or else those who prefer to listen to the talks and the London News from 2YA with music in between. I think that affairs as they will exist during the Parliamentary session should not be altered.—"PRO-BING" (Khandallah).

Sir,—Is it proposed to go on preparing and printing musical programmes for 2YC on three nights of the week which will never be heard, and to continue penalising the good-music listeners of Wellington during sessions of Parliament? In normal times we get an allotted share of music from Wellington stations, though it is by no means as much as 3YA and 3YL give Christchurch, nor as much as 1YA, 1YX and 1ZM give Auckland. But now during Parliament our share is cut down most unfairly, while 2YD and 2ZB go on largely overlapping. There has been no outcry from Auckland against the whole hour of good music 1ZM has every night from 7 to 8 p.m., which is in addition to 1YX's well-planned after-eight programmes. Why should there not be some music on 2YD? I cannot find anything there to make-up for what I lose from 2YC. It is absurd for the NBS to go on ignoring the disturbance, as if evening sittings of Parliament were a possibility and not a certainty, and to carry the pretence so far as to publish programmes that will never be heard. Complaints have been made in the past, but still no attempt seems to have been made to restore a part of our ration, which presumably was regarded as our right when it was allotted.

TWENTY-FIVE BOB (Wellington).

Sir,—I protest against the cutting out of the 2YC programmes on Wednesday to Saturday when Parliament is in session. These classical programmes I feel sure are a delight to music-lovers. Other centres can always get their main station and auxiliary station, but those depending on Wellington have to be content with one station as reception from other places is generally indifferent. I suggest that 2YA programmes be re-arranged when Parliament is sitting, so as to include a goodly number of the classical items scheduled for 2YC.

"CLASSIC" (Wanganui).

[Several other letters on the same topic, and generally in the same strain, have been received. We regret that we cannot find space for the others.—Ed.]

PHIZ AND MR. PICKWICK

Sir,—The illustration you print is not Seymour's portrait of Mr. Pickwick "addressing the assembled members of the club," which does not show his toes, but whether it was drawn by Seymour or Phiz or anyone else is really beside the point as the conception of Pickwick copied by all later artists was undoubtedly "originally imagined" by Seymour and not by Phiz as you stated. The signature you reproduce is also beside the

point, as it is not of the artist, but of the engravers, the four brothers Dalziel, who also engraved Tenniel's illustrations to *Alice in Wonderland*, and many other works.—R. D. McELDOWNNEY (Bayswater).

[The signature we reproduced was so much to the point that it put us clearly in the wrong.—Ed.]

WHITE IN A NIGHT

Sir,—In *The Listener* of June 8 Radio Viewsreel, "Handy Things, Facts," I read the following: "My hair is grey, but not with years. Nor grew it white in a single night, as men's have grown from sudden fears." Lord Byron wrote this, but do you believe that anyone's hair can turn

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white overnight? You do? Then listen to the voice of Science: 'Physicians have never found an authenticated case.'

I am 70 years of age and when I was about eight years of age, and garroting was common in England, a woman friend stayed with us; her hair had turned white in a single night. At my mother's request she told me the tale. When out walking in a lonely place one afternoon two men approached her, and asked for money, then went behind her and seized her throat. She lost consciousness until after she was rescued. The following morning on looking in her mirror she found that her red hair all round her forehead and halfway across her head was snow white.

I have never listened to the "Voice of Science," or heard doubt cast on this fact until reading the paragraph mentioned in *The Listener*.

AMY MCKENZIE (Napier).

CHILDREN AND FILMS

Sir,—Your woesome correspondent "Mehitabel" complains of murder and heroic films and their bad influence on children. Well now, what will be bad for children next? Once it was serials on the radio and American slang. But now it's the films. What does "Mehitabel" want to do? Take from the children all their amusements? We have got along with the present pictures all right in the past, so we will get along all right with them in the future. And what does he (or she) mean by "some other form of amusement?" I say to "Mehitabel"—"Leave the kids (children) alone."

SMALL FRY (Te Puke).

CORRESPONDENCE VIRTUES

Sir,—If there is one person more than another that we expect to set us an example in the virtues of correspondence it is our worthy Editor. Yet we find that a correspondent "Audio" writes reasoning that less than a quarter of *The Listener's* reading matter is being devoted to the feature of its professed object, and saying he regards this as an undue degree of divergence from our objective. You reply that "to argue that we must," etc., and continue with eight lines of that which "Audio" did not argue or suggest; which I think is unbecoming. I agree with "Audio" and I think that it is to its disadvantage that our paper is

thus straying from the established practice of other such productions.

G.H.B. (Tauranga).

[Would our correspondent supply the name of "another such production" whose "established practice" differs from our own?—Ed.]

THE FRIENDLY ROAD

Sir,—As a constant listener to the "Friendly Road" Service of Song I feel that other people will agree with me that half-an-hour is not long enough. Could it not be lengthened to 45 minutes. This could replace the recordings played for the quarter-of-an-hour before the sports interview.—PETER GRAHAME FULDSETH (Christchurch).

ALIENS

Sir,—In his excellent poem, "Alien Ways," Whim Wham has used what is perhaps the best possible weapon against Fascism. With ridicule that is pointed without being barbed, he defends a minority that is being used as a whipping boy, while being fair to a very much misrepresented majority. I know of no returned serviceman or woman who would support for a moment the degenerate suggestion of the R.S.A. with regard to the expulsion of enemy aliens.

M.M.A. (York Bay).

Sir,—I thank you for the insertion in your issue of July 6 of "Alien Ways," by Whim Wham. It is noteworthy. The line "for those self-guaranteed as fit, to govern and inhabit it" is a fitting rebuke to autocrats—especially military ones!

To lovers of freedom this poem should have a permanent place in the mind. The author has used the ablest weapon of the polemic, wit mingled with sarcasm with dignified effect.

WILLIAM ADAMS (Lower Hutt).

WEATHER BROADCASTS

Sir,—We have just listened to the weather forecast at 9 p.m. with much appreciation after so long an absence. The announcing was not all that it might have been, but the announcer redeemed himself in enlivening the forecast with a delightful "spoonerism." Instead of saying "scattered showers drifting over the South Island" he said "shattered cows . . ." then hastily corrected himself.

SPOONER (Hakataramea).

LOTS OF POETRY

Sir,—I congratulate your contributor J.C.B. on his review, "Lots of Poetry." He obviously knows his job: his review was lively, provocative, and a pleasure to read. I make a plunge, and say with confidence that posterity, if interested, will classify Mr. Curnow as a journalist, and Mr. Carr as a politician. It is time the poet-boys developed a sense of humour and proportion. J.C.B. in his review has neatly put them in correct perspective.

TUSCAN (Christchurch).

Sir,—When Allen Curnow protested against surrounding a well considered review of poetry with facetiousness, you would have been more consistent had you tried to see his point instead of trying to snub him. When you yourself said: "The most we can do is to treasure it (talent) and pay for it," I assume you were serious. Now the review under discussion does, in my opinion, encourage the prevalent view that poetry is rather a humorous affair and poets eccentric blokes. If I am right in my opinion, then such a review will hinder rather than help the "paying for talent," i.e., the buying of the publications.

D. K. ANDERSON (Christchurch).