

AUGUST 17, 1945

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES:
115 Lambton Quay, Wellington, C.I.
G.P.O. Box 1707.
Wellington, C.I.
Telephone 46-520.
Telegraphic Address: "Listener," Wellington

Horror With Some Hope

THE atomic bomb revelations will have sickened many people and given others a faint gleam of hope. We join the band of hope. We join partly because it is necessary to have hope to live, and partly because there is now at length a chance that war has become too destructive to continue. The fact that wars are waged at all means that the human race is not wise enough or fine enough to live at peace for the best reasons. But most of us have enough wit to get off the line when the train is coming. We are capable of considerable prudence if not, in general, of high intelligence. We make war because wars, so far, have proved relatively harmless. They have not yet blotted a single powerful nation from the face of the earth. The present war, for example, may have killed one per cent of the men and women who were alive six years ago; not more than that, and probably not so many. At its very worst points it may have killed or maimed 10 per cent in Russia, and a slightly higher proportion in Germany. In both cases our figures are almost certainly far too high. But to be horrifying enough to cease before it could start war would have to mean the speedy end of the belligerents as coherent nations—the death of the majority and the complete destruction of the way of life of all. This war has never meant in modern times, and because it has never meant this, and because such things have never been regarded as possibilities, wars go on. But the atomic bomb may mean something like that—at present no one knows with certainty—and if it does there is now for the first time a possibility, faint but appreciable, that we are witnessing the last world war. Therefore it is justifiable to hope as well as to shudder.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Sir,—The suggestion is made by your correspondent H.C.D. that more questions relating to the Bible should be included in the various quizzes broadcast, "if for no other reason than to stimulate interest in that greatest of all books." Is it too much to ask that an inspired book should enthuse one with such interest? But what are the facts? Those who reach maturity without a knowledge of the Bible find it difficult to make much sense out of it when they settle down to read it. Don't conclude that I am opposed to such quizzes. They will prove helpful to truth-seekers and to keep the ball rolling I would suggest the following question as the natural corollary of the one quoted: "Who wrote the first five books of the Old Testament?" I am puzzling over the number of noughts which will follow the princely £2 comprising the Jackpot alluded to, if the prize is ever claimed.

In closing, congratulations to "Whim Wham" on his worthy effort, "Alien Ways." The resolution of the R.S.A. constitutes but a new version of anti-Semitism, and can only help to discredit their organisation. QUIZ (Takapuna).

SHOCK TREATMENT

Sir,—O. E. Burton's letter is very opportune. There are many people whose consciences trouble them when they think of the welfare of the mentally unfit. I hope the publicity given to the "shocking" cure was part of a plan to pave the way towards making the public interested in hearing further details. My criticism of hospitals is that they are too few and too isolated. There are older women who could do excellent work in such hospitals if it didn't entail leaving home. Many patients would be content and happy in these institutions if they were visited by relatives and friends, but as some hospitals are situated at present a day is required to pay only a short visit.

Then the congestion in mental hospitals could be relieved if there were places in the nature of day nurseries where relatives could leave patients for short periods. I have known pathetic cases where senile sufferers have been sent to asylums because relations have broken down under the strain of night duty. As many of the incurable patients are in mental hospitals because of the timidity, love of comfort, lack of understanding, and stupidity of the sane, it is only just that we should make the lives of these sacrifices as happy and as contented as possible.

GRATITUDE (Dunedin).

DICKENS AND SEYMOUR

Sir,—On page 8 of your issue for July 27 under heading "Birth of a Notion" it is stated that "Dickens was paid to illustrate Seymour . . . but when Seymour died Dickens rapidly freed himself from the first conception of the Nimrod Club."

Reference to Forster's *Life of Dickens*, and to the introduction by Charles Dickens the younger, to a reprint of the First Edition of *Pickwick*, Chapman and Hall, 1911, shows that Dickens certainly did not illustrate Seymour, as the proposal that he do so was rejected by him. The widow of Seymour made

such a claim and this was repeated by her son. Dickens writing in 1866 said: "Mr. Seymour the artist never originated, suggested or in any way had to do with, save as an illustrator of what I devised, an incident, a character (except the sporting tastes of Mr. Winkle), a name, a phrase, a word to be found in the *Pickwick Papers*." This, even apart from other available evidence, conclusively proves that Dickens did not "illustrate Seymour." You are certainly right in saying that "with the introduction of Sam Weller the series became a stupendous success," but this had no connection with any reaction of Dickens to the change of artists as your commentator implies.

R. L. ANDREW (Kelburn).

PROGRAMMES

Sir,—Words of gratitude for the 6 o'clock dance sessions from 2YC. I like the way the announcer puts them through snappily without unnecessary wordage. The music, too, is good, virile stuff with a pleasing absence of the gutless Silvester, Bradley style of thing.

But are these "howitzer" organs as popular as we'd think from the amount of air time they get? They can't be!

Then the meditation music sessions after 11 o'clock news from 2YA used to be wonderful: slow movements from symphonies, concertos, etc., but lately the emotional content has been on a level with the dinner session offerings. Come, come! Let's have more of the profound music—a perfect ending to the day.

ANON (Timaru).

RADIO VIEWSREEL

Sir,—Your correspondent Alan N. Stewart is to be congratulated on his well-chosen remarks regarding your feature Radio Viewsreel, and I feel that his criticism is justified by the one-sided views expressed therein and the fact that any music that is not classical is seldom commented upon. He may be overlooking a possible reason for such biased comments as far as they concern music. Apparently the enthusiasts for classical music are deeply concerned by the fact that their music does not meet with popular taste, and therefore feel that to justify these sessions they must continually boost up all that is classical and ridicule whenever possible anything that is not. It is a strange fact that, although that great majority of listeners who prefer jazz, swing, or light popular music, seldom begrudge the highbrow his sessions, the latter is continually trying to deprive them of theirs, and will take every opportunity of thrusting his sonatas, preludes, fifth movements, etc., down the other fellow's throat. The intolerant attitude of the average classical listener is well known to all but himself, but if further proof is needed then Radio Viewsreel gives us a typical example.

STRICT TEMPO (Christchurch).

BRITAIN AND NEW ZEALAND

Sir,—J.M.'s letter and the manner of writing seem to indicate why these two "Homies" have fared so badly for the past six years. The right sort of attitude towards their adopted country would, I am sure, have had the right results. I

have a very good English friend, now resident in New Zealand since 1939. His first year here was spent largely in making odious comparisons between New Zealand and England and always to New Zealand's detriment. He just didn't seem to be able to help it. He found so much to deplore; our drunkenness and our craze for horse-racing and many other horrible colonial habits that he simply had to give tongue. I found it hard to be forbearing, but I knew that, given time, and being at heart a kind and tolerant person, he would grow out of it. It usually takes a year or two for the newcomer to realise that apart from superficial differences, people are much the same the world over. Most "Homies" go through this uncomfortable phase, but I've never heard of any of our English cousins taking six years to adjust themselves. J.M.'s must be a singularly stubborn case of bigotry and intolerance. Anyone with intelligence can see that all New Zealanders can't be wrong, and two English people alone be right. J.M. would probably fare the same if she went to Canada, or South Africa. I suggest that she read a little philosophy—say Havelock Ellis on the art of being "at home" in this world.

"AURORA" 1840 (Upper Hutt).

Sir,—I am English to the backbone and proud of it, but I have lived in and loved New Zealand for 21 years, and criticisms such as that of J.M. (Rotorua) make my blood boil. From my experience of the few such "Homies" I have met, they are the type of people who also grumbled at many things at home; and if people come to a new and not fully developed country without having the sense to find out possible disadvantages, and are not prepared to adapt themselves to the new conditions, they cannot expect to be very welcome. As to the refusal of a Government official to give her husband preferential treatment over a New Zealander, why should he do so, unless the Englishman's qualifications were superior to those of the native applicant for the post? J.M.'s husband had been here only a week, and had yet to prove his worth.

The accusation that an "anti-Home" feeling exists here is quite contrary to the experience of myself and other friends. From the day we landed, we almost invariably found that we had only to mention that we were English to have every imaginable kindness and thoughtful help extended to us. The whole attitude was symbolised by the lovely friendly name "New Chums," given to us.

Finally, New Zealanders are not mere passing or fair-weather friends, but surely some of the most loyal. In places ranging from Hokianga to Tauranga and Hawke's Bay I have made friendships which have stood the test, through good fortune and bad, of from 14 to 21 years, and from my heart I say "God Bless New Zealand."

On one point only I agree with J.M. The British people regard most animals as friends, cats and dogs almost as members of the family, and are most humane in the treatment of all animals, and New Zealanders do seem callous in our eyes. It is only fair to add that much of the harsh treatment of farm animals is due very largely to unavoidable circumstances. D. SPRAGUE (Auckland).