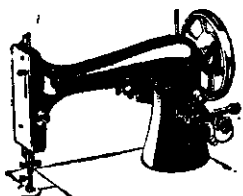


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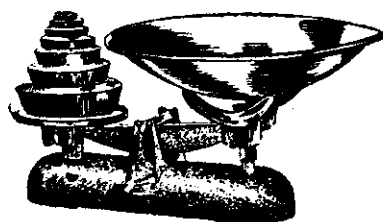
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FOUR YEARS OF "LISTENERS"

WE are not so smug as to accept this tribute or so sanctimonious as to pretend not to like it. Part of it may, however, be true; all of it is spontaneous; and the author is an occasional contributor who has no special cause to be grateful to us.

LIVING in the country one accumulates things. In four years we got together all sorts of lumber: a couple of extra children, piles of shoes and beer bottles, and at least three more packing-cases of books. I always pack the books first.

This time I was faced with another problem. During the war years I got into the habit of putting aside newspapers or magazines with any particularly interesting piece of information. I stuck them on top of a cupboard in the boys' room and by the time we left they reached the ceiling. It is one of the disadvantages of living in historic times. Anyway they caused a bit of excitement on the final day, for we had the open fire going all day, and as there was plenty of paper to burn as well as clothes and we had only a tin chimney in an old ramshackle house built about 1870, the whole place caught alight. The fire brigade came and put it out. Of course all the village turned out too, but they didn't get much of a run for their money. I felt rather sorry for the next tenant. It was such a bad house that he would have been much better off in a tent.

But the papers that were such hot stuff were not all New Zealand *Listeners*. As a matter of fact I had four years of them put away, and when it came to burning them I was surprised to find how much I wanted to keep. So I sat up several evenings going through them, tearing out all the articles I wanted. And finally I filed a whole series of articles in folders under appropriate headings, such as Social, Educational, Scientific, Geographical, Music, Biography, Books and Criticism, Films and Drama, Art, etc.

Pungent and Permanent

We are so used to the ephemeral news that we no longer seek permanent values in anything costing twopence or threepence. We buy, glance at, and burn. But reminiscence is good for the soul and revaluation for the pocket. Readers of *The Listener* may like to be reminded of some of the things they have had served up to them so faithfully over the last few years. There have been articles which were pungent and to the point which have retained their interest; interviews, book reviews, film reviews, etc., which were memorable and remain valuable. I don't intend to criticise or evaluate, but merely to remind. . . . Perhaps it will suggest to others the keeping of a file for clippings in 1946.

Social and Educational

Some of the articles I didn't burn were "The Spirit of England," "UNRRA, CORSO—and YOU," "Socialism Without Bureaucrats," "What is a Community Centre?," "I Discover Wireless—in Prison," "Power as the Instrument of Justice," "Help if we ask for it," "Do I



"... They caused a bit of excitement"

need to be idle . . . ?" There were lots more, of course: I have chosen at random, and mainly from this year. There is one interesting thing one notices about *The Listener* when looking through a series of articles. It is that *there is often a question mark at the end of a statement*. "Training Society to Think" is the name of one article. It seems to be the aim of the whole staff, an aim delightfully sugar-coated. By the way, unless you are a regular reader of the best overseas papers, where did you first get your ideas about UNRRA, etc.? Who first clarified in your mind the population problem of the Western World? the Jewish question? erosion? rehabilitation? in New Zealand made clear what they are trying to do in Invercargill about licensing? in Feilding about Adult Education? or in schools about accrediting?

In the country *The Listener* is the main educational organ; the radio itself takes second place to it. In schools it is a textbook one can pass examinations on.

Biography Up-to-Date

The Listener can always tell us who is who while he still is somebody; and the editor can write an obituary that remains in one's mind. Enemies receive fair play and friends sympathy without sentimentality. Do you remember those vivid portraits of Roosevelt and Dewey, of Freyberg and his Division, of Hitler and Mussolini and Churchill and Attlee. The heat of the moment never goes to *The Listener's* head. Looking back through my files I am surprised in spite of myself to find it always calm, detached but not unmoved, critical but not carping, inquisitive but not nasty.

Editorials

The editorials have been praised by J. C. Beaglehole as models of good prose. Do you recall "Tears but No Blood" ("Democracy enables us to change our rulers without cutting off their heads. . . ."); "Victory in Europe" ("We must save ourselves, and salvation is by works as well as by faith."); "Radio Serials" ("It is one thing to send children to bed to make sure that they get rest and sleep, and another thing altogether to say that if they stay up and listen to the things their parents are listening to they will be started on the road to

ruin.") "Artists and Critics"? ("But the critic has his duty too. He must say what he thinks true when it is for the good of society that he should speak at all. . . ."); "Soldiers Into Civilians" ("Though it is not true any longer that when a war has been won the men who won it are forgotten, it is true that men go to war on a high wave of patriotism and return on a lower wave. . . ."); "Horror with Some Hope" ("The atomic bomb will have sickened many people and given others a faint gleam of hope. We join the band of hope. . . .")?

Book Reviews

G.M. in the film line has brought out his own book, and can speak for himself. He does it very well. But over the years *The Listener* has been quietly probing the New Zealand scene, seeking the New Zealand novel, telling us about New Zealand verse, dropping pertinent comments on pertinent books by educationists and philosophers. Through *The Listener* tens of thousands of New Zealanders have heard for the first time of Holcroft, McCormick, Combs, Beaglehole, Fairburn, Somerset, Mulgan, Sargeison, Isobel Andrews, and others who in effect are creating the New Zealand scene, providing our mental climate. It

(continued on next page)

The Old
Year
Remains



IMAGINE not that midnight
Saw the old year in flight
Riding the bells to limbo.

THAT which passed was no more
Than a page the wind bore
Torn from a calendar.

FOR the year remains the year
That was hope, that was love,
that was fear.

YOU may shake off the sudden
hand
Of a stranger, but you may not
disown
The year that nested with your
bone.

IT cannot leave you as you cannot
leave yourself:
It has become you, for it was its
dawns of dread.
Its heavy amorous nights, its whirl-
ing days
That left you as you are yet un-
completed
Till other years with sure and
fateful fingers
Shall build in you the figure of
hope or doom.

—J. R. Hervey