

# HE IS ENVIOUS OF OUR BOOKSHOPS

## —And Warns Our Youth Against Exile

SOME of the people *The Listener* interviews, when they come to New Zealand doing interesting jobs, are hard to write about afterwards because they can't or won't be interesting themselves. Some others are hard to write about because, on the contrary, they are so interesting, and so willing to be interesting, that they also present a problem, a problem of selection. David Fullerton, a Scotsman who is here representing the Oxford University Press, is one of the latter. We had an appointment to spend one hour with him, but all except ten minutes of it had gone before we really got down to the plain question-and-answer business that provides a printable interview. For 50 minutes he had been too interesting—and that means of course that he was very friendly and ready. In fact, he was helpful even to the extent of offering to be questioned again later in the day, when he realised we hadn't got what we had come for, and most of what we are able to tell our readers about him now comes from that second interview.

### What He Is

But even then he was not anxious to talk about himself. With some difficulty we got him to say that if the Oxford Press had to give him a title it would be Overseas Sales Manager. He told us also why he is here, putting it in these words: "I'm here simply as a publisher, to have a look round, in the belief that it's no earthly use at all sitting over there and theorising about what is likely to be wanted over here."

He represents the Oxford University Press, one of the two publishing houses owned by Oxford University. The Clarendon Press publishes the specialised and learned works; the Oxford Press publishes the general literature, bibles, and so on. "And just to make it a little more confusing, the Clarendon Press is actually in Oxford, but the Oxford Press is in London. My office is in London."

The two firms are entirely owned by the University and, instead of directors as there would be in an ordinary company, there is a board of delegates from the University. The head of the Oxford Press is G. F. J. Cumberlege, and he is called Publisher to the University. The head of the Clarendon Press is Kenneth Sisam, a New Zealander, and he is secretary to the Board of Delegates.

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of admission are forced to a level which cannot be reached by young people and students—by those, in fact, on whom our musical future depends.

In a word, therefore, a symphony orchestra can be kept in being only if the public is overcharged, if the programmes are over-popular, and if the musicians are overworked and under-rehearsed; unless our governing bodies, national, county and municipal, come to recognise that the social service rendered by music is worthy of support, even at a cost to the community.

There are about 300 employees altogether in the two organisations, but that does not include printers and tradesmen, who are a separate unit under the Printer to the University, John Johnson. The Clarendon Press has about three on its editorial staff in Oxford, and the Oxford Press has four on its staff in London. One of these before the war was John Mulgan, who has just been posthumously awarded the M.C. for his service in Greece. At present a senior man on the O.U.P. staff is another New Zealander, Dan Davin, whose first novel, *Cliffs of Fall*, was reviewed in *The Listener* last year.

### No One Grabs the Profits

"We are not a commercial concern," Mr. Fullerton explains, "to this extent—that all profits go back into the University's Publishing Chest, and are used to subsidise the very expensive things that wouldn't pay their own way. The thirteen-volume Oxford Dictionary, for instance, cost some enormous sum, it might have been £300,000—something like that anyway—because of course you have to have such an enormous team of people spending years looking things up, and that would never have been possible without the Chest to draw on."

"Talking of dictionaries," we said, remembering the recent bitter complaint of someone who couldn't get one, "when are we going to get some dictionaries and Fowlers again?"

"They'll come. But you must remember you're far better off for books than we are in London. I've been amazed here at the remarkable variety in your bookshops. There are more books available here than there are in London. In London you think your luck's in if you find a pile of Penguins so high." (Mr. Fullerton held one hand about 18 inches above the other.) "And as for art books, I was delighted to have the opportunity of seeing that new book of Augustus John's paintings in a bookshop here yesterday. I hadn't seen it before, and may not when I get back. All art books are snapped up at once in London, as many as there are, and you can't keep anything really good in stock for longer than ten minutes or so it seems."

"Has the price of books in New Zealand surprised you?"

"Not at all. I was in Australia before I came here."

"And the difference between the price of a book in England and the price of the same book here doesn't seem abnormal to you?"

"Not really. In the first place your Government puts a three per cent prime on, which I've never heard of anywhere else. Didn't you know that? And then you add 25 per cent for exchange, and postage on to that..."

### The Export of Brains

Mr. Fullerton had some interesting things to say about New Zealanders in London, and New Zealanders at home who would like to be in London. He

had, he told us, met one group of young men here, all interested in music, one of whom had told him that he couldn't go any longer hearing everything at second hand, and must go overseas as soon as possible.

"I do hope the people of your generation won't keep on coming over to Europe and never coming back," he said. "However great the gain might be at first in widening of experiences, and so on, in the end you simply can't make the best of yourself in exile. It's been astonishing to me to discover when I come here how many young men with ideas and ambitions regard it as absolutely imperative for them to get away."

"Do you think a man like Davin feels that loss now, and is the less for what he is missing?"

"I imagine Davin is just getting a little peace now, after his war, and probably that's the main thing for him at the moment. But surely a writer or an artist needs to hang on to his own country?"

### Not Starved for the Arts

When we had talked a little while of England to-day, and the resurgence of public interest in the arts, we asked Mr. Fullerton whether England felt intellectually what she feels materially towards America: whether the Englishman whose interest is in the arts feels envious of the American's wealth in this respect, of the wholesale migration of continental artists to America, and the plentiful supply to meet cultural demands there.

"I think the Americans have everything except quality," he said, and then reflected: "No, I don't think anyone in England is really envious of them in that way. Perhaps some of us rather wish so many of our pictures hadn't gone over there, but at present in London there's a positively phenomenal activity going on in the stage, and concert halls and galleries, and some of the things that are being done are tremendously exciting. Our ballet, for instance, is the tops. Robert Helpman and Margot Fonteyn are wonderful. All these places are packed out, so you can imagine there's a great sense of excitement about it all."

"And all this is new?"

"Absolutely new. It's a change that has occurred during the war. A new public for the arts has developed."

### Spain To-day

From America our conversation wandered to Spain, which Mr. Fullerton visited last year. He was in Madrid, for instance, last April.

"A fascinating place—extraordinary. Absolutely riddled with corruption and bribery. You can't travel anywhere, or get a ticket for anything, without having to bribe someone. But it's intensely interesting in Spain. The Spaniards are simply not influenced by anyone else, and they all think the rest of the world



DAVID FULLERTON

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is quite uncivilised. They're the only people I know who have a sincere contempt for French civilisation. The rest of us all have a sneaking belief that France has really achieved something, but to the Spaniards it is all quite superficial and ephemeral, and Spain is the true leader of the civilised world!"

"Are the Spaniards not much concerned with the things that worry other peoples at the moment then? Are they not afraid?"

"They are—they have a terrible fear of civil war. I think they are so much preoccupied with that particular fear that they don't look beyond their own country for other worries. They've had such a frightful time with civil war, everyone is terrified of the thought of another. No one has a good word for the Franco Government, but no one has a good word for the Republican Government that preceded it, so its rather a frightful situation. But perhaps I shouldn't say they're entirely self-centred in their outlook; there's one place they do look towards, which is Rome."

### Brazil, Mexico, Peru

Mr. Fullerton has also been in Latin America in the last few years, and he did some work there for the British Council, and also for the O.U.P.

"In Brazil, things are very much alive. There's a very live school of painters there, doing very interesting things. And the fusion of the races in Brazil is most interesting—the cosmic man is emerging there."

"Mexico—yes, Mexico is very alive, but I think the altitude affects people and makes them touchy or nervy or something, and there are 'Situations' always developing."

"But Peru—I think Peru is the most fascinating of them all. I was up over the Andes; going inland from Lima by road you are 17,000 feet up after 85 miles; we went down into a valley where the Indians are still preserving their ancient civilisation, and there's an amazing thing there: it never rains, and so all the old textiles of pre-Inca civilisations are preserved there, in wonderful condition and in their original colours. But it's rather tantalising, because no one can put a date to anything."