

MARCH 1, 1946

The Postman Knocks Twice

IT is not often the postman behaves as obligingly as he did last week, delivering the article on Page 7 on the same day as he brought us the article on Page 6. The two ought to be read together, not because the account of how would-be immigrants to New Zealand are besieging our High Commissioner's Office in London should be smugly regarded as an antidote to the "confession" by a talented young New Zealander of the reasons why he is looking forward to leaving this country for England, but rather because both articles are, strictly speaking, parts of the same story: both are symptomatic of a world-wide condition of unrest. But Mr. Meek's side of the story is, from its nature, the part that should concern us most. He is not the first New Zealander to have felt the way he does, nor will he be the last; and there is of course the consolation, if we feel the need for any, that on figures the balance is all in New Zealand's favour. In a matter like this, however, it might be unwise to see too much virtue in figures, off-setting the loss of one disgruntled radical against his replacement, as soon as circumstances permit, by all these scores of useful and worthy citizens catalogued on Page 7. For Mr. Meek is to some degree our responsibility in the present, whereas those others have still to become our responsibility in the future: it is dissatisfaction with New Zealand as he finds it now that is sending him overseas, and that fact in itself gives cause for a certain amount of national self-examination. It would be foolishly complacent also to accept his own valuation of his principal motive; for what he calls "cowardice" might with equal justice be described as a form of "divine discontent." To say all this is not necessarily to support in any way Mr. Meek's reasons for going: indeed, when he does reach England he will very possibly find that those reasons were quite inadequate and that he is to some extent the victim of a romantic imagination. But whether one agrees with him or not, it should be readily admitted that he has made a challenging statement. To meet that challenge the figures from New Zealand House are in themselves not sufficient.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

CARTOONISTS

Sir,—Your correspondent M.B. is in error in suggesting that Minhinick slavishly imitates Low. In any case Minhinick is superior to Low as a cartoonist in technical excellence, wit and humour. I learn on good authority that the former was offered double his present remuneration to go abroad, but preferred to live in New Zealand.

EILRAY (Wellington).

Sir,—I should like to comment on the letter, concerning New Zealand cartoonists, which appeared in a recent copy of *The Listener*.

Your correspondent has overlooked several important points. He accuses both Minhinick and Clark of plagiarisms without stopping to remember the old truism "there's nothing new under the sun," which is heavily underlined by the fact that there are many able cartoonists in the world to-day, all endeavouring to portray the political scene in the most succinct manner possible. M.B. has been misled into accusing Minhinick of "slavishly imitating Low" by the fact that they both use the same type of people and draw them with an extremely forceful economy of line. But to say that this is slavish imitation is to wrong a very able cartoonist.

It happened that just prior to reading M.B.'s letter I was snorting with delight over Gertie "looking up at him with a soft black eye." I do not know the work of the artist — Emmett — to whom M.B. refers, but I do know that Clark, with his delightfully grotesque people, makes illustrations which couldn't be bettered—do you remember the hypochondriac, his table littered with bottles, his face with pimples, and worried ear glued to the wireless, or the rehabilitation illustrations? Well!

Doodling, as far as I can make out, is an Americanism meaning "aimless scribbles," and to accuse A. S. Paterson—whose cartoons have delighted me since I first saw them about 20 years ago—to accuse Paterson of doodling is simply futile. Each of his little pictures is a gem, full of verve and very often exquisitely humorous.

J. HOWARD SCOTT (Southland).

BLIND LISTENERS

Sir,—At last someone has taken up the question of the "Session for the Blind" which was terminated so abruptly some weeks ago, for no apparent reason. It is difficult to understand why this session, of all sessions, should have been cut out when it gave such pleasure to the many blind—and not only the blind—who listened each Sunday.

A person with sight cannot imagine just what it means to be shut off completely from seeing all that is taking place around one. I wonder how many ever stop to think of what they would do if their sight was suddenly taken away?

This is where the session came in. It gave the blind a sense of having something of their own in this busy world, through which they could hear various topics of world interest; how blind folk in other parts of the world are progressing and making a success of their chosen professions; also items of local

news of their own activities in which they could join. It was only 15 minutes—15 out of the several thousands the station is on the air in a week—but the pleasure given by those 15 minutes was immeasurable. The session was also of value in that it made sighted people aware of the blind in their midst. It taught the meaning of the white stick, how the person carrying one can be helped across the road, on or off tram; small actions but ones which convey to that blind person a knowledge that kindness is still to be found in the rush and bustle of life.

I may be wrong, but I believe New Zealand is one of the few countries which has inaugurated a session of this kind, so do not let us lose the reputation of being amongst the up-to-date countries.

"A LISTENER IN THE LIGHT"

(Wellington).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

ORGAN MUSIC

Sir,—As a great admirer of Dr. J. C. Bradshaw's rendering of organ music (though unfortunately unable to hear him always on Friday nights owing to static), I should very much like to know if it is possible to make recordings of his recitals so that they could

More letters from listeners will be found on page 18

be broadcast from other main stations. It is nothing less than a tragedy if recordings cannot be made of such really beautiful music, especially when one thinks of the numberless repetitions of organ record broadcasts of the "Whistler and His Dog" type, complete with ghastly cymbal, bell and slurring effects, illustrating just how a musical instrument can be needlessly turned into one of torture. Furthermore, I really doubt if the majority of listeners want the latter type of music, and if they do, then they need educating up to something better.

F.B. (Waitara).

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Sir,—I have listened patiently to the programmes of contemporary music broadcast by the main stations on Sunday afternoons, and have been rewarded at times by the presentation of good music. But I fear that I was most grateful to 4YA for playing only one movement of Morton Gould's First Symphony. As the movement progressed I imagined the strings like lone spirits wandering about in the pit of hell in great agony and despair and hammered into senselessness at intervals by great strokes on the percussion instruments. I can accommodate my ear to the dissonant intervals of Stravinsky and Prokofiev on occasion but I find it impossible to wander down the maze of noises somehow incorporated into a musical score by these American composers without wondering what it is all about. Of course, they are entitled to be heard, and as often as the exponents of the jazz medium, but one can't help wishing that the announcer would introduce these programmes by telling us what foul clutch of circumstance precipitated the writing of such music. In most cases we can follow the works of the great masters with at least a glimmering of understanding and

CRICKET BROADCASTS

THE National Broadcasting Service will broadcast commentaries on the play during the forthcoming tour of New Zealand by the Australian Cricket XI. The dates will be:

March 1, 2, 4, and 5, Auckland, 1YA.

March 8, 9, 11, and 12, Canterbury, 3YA.

March 15, 16, 18 and 19, Otago, 4YA.

March 22, 23, 25, and 26, Wellington, 2YA.

March 29, 30, and April 1 and 2, New Zealand, 2YA.

In addition to commentaries, the play will be reviewed at the end of each day by the station concerned. Times of broadcasts will be announced in our next issue.

always with admiration, but when admiration fails, as in many of these new works, could we not be introduced to the inner meaning of the music, if there is any.

Virgil Thomson's article on the subject featured in a recent *Listener* seemed evasive and inconclusive, and I feel that I would rather a musician kept to his province of making beautiful or meaningful music, romantic or architectural, and leave express trains, motorised armies and aeroplanes to theirs, of creating monstrous noises. Contemporary British composers write tuneful music. Perhaps they are weary of battle noises, even as I. G.S.P. (Dunedin).

CLARE-PAGE RECITALS

Sir,—The recently completed series of recitals from 3YA by Maurice Clare and Frederick Page were, like the previous broadcasts by Mr. Clare, among the best presentations ever heard over the air in this country.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the NBS for giving all music-lovers an opportunity of hearing such perfection in performance. The accompanying comments, too, were excellent. It is to be hoped that this exceptionally fine musician will be heard again from other YA stations.

MARGARET SEIFERT (Hamilton).

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

Sir,—Can you tell me the reason for the very exasperating way in which these Operas are being presented from the various Stations? On Tuesday, February 12, from 1YA we had 40 minutes, during which time we were treated to portions of Act 1 of *Iolanthe* and Act 2 of *The Sorcerer*. The result was a mutilation of both Operas leading to a sense of frustration and a wealth of bad language.

In that 40 minutes we could have had the whole act of either of the operas.

Is it a question of copyright, or are the programme organisers completely out of touch with the listeners? If the former, how is it that prior to the war we were able to have a complete opera in one presentation?

Perhaps the programme organisers think that half a loaf is better than no bread, but I can assure them that to a real Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiast, such a presentation as we had last Tuesday only induces a sense of disgust.

W. R. SMEE (Auckland).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Shorty" (Dunedin): Not reviewed in *Listener*.

"Left, but Right" (Dunedin): Too personal. "One Reader" (Auckland): We accept your protest but not your interpretation of the article.

"Joe" (Tauranga): Thanks, but look again—on Page 12.