



HECTOR BOLITHO

same as I'm giving here in Auckland—my 30 exciting years, you know. But I don't mind lecturing in America—it's this Auckland lecture that has me worried. I tell you, I'm really terrified! Think of it: standing up there and lecturing in my own home-town! I don't know how I shall ever do it." He was partly joking—but only partly.

"The Worst Judgment"

I reminded Mr. Bolitho that the last time he was here, in 1934, he had expressed himself shocked at what he described as two menaces in Auckland, the passion for gossip and the bitterness against Germany. I asked him what he thought about these things now.

"I'm delighted to see them both flourishing," he said at once. "Delighted. I never was so mistaken in my life as I was about Germany. It was the worst judgment I ever made. It's part of one's arrogance to be generous to a vanquished people and I was young and arrogant and I thought I knew Germany. I was wrong. But look at the world today! It's incredibly hard to make a judgment of any sort. Wouldn't it be delightful to live in Switzerland, never to have to make a judgment about anything but what to eat for breakfast, eh?"

Mr. Bolitho moved from the difficulties of the world to the special difficulties in Auckland—the gas situation, the housing situation, the domestic help situation. He is full of praise and sympathy for the New Zealand elderly housewives who have no help in their daily drudgery—"and yet they do it all and work like slaves and then go out looking well-dressed and well-groomed and quite smart." He is disgusted with the bad manners of our young people: "The young people and the people in shops and restaurants and on trams are rude and unmannerly and, well, just not nice. Nobody's nice any more. It doesn't pay to be nice."

Before he left Mr. Bolitho said he would very much like to pay a tribute to the memory of a young New Zealander, John Mulgan, with whom he collaborated in writing a book once.

"It is a loss of a person of real importance and promise," he said. "He had so many qualities you were seldom meeting one person. He had a good mind but he wasn't a prig; he was a person of fine feeling without sentimentality and he was greatly liked by people in Oxford. He was a good talker and he had the peculiarly New Zealand characteristic that he did a job when he set out to do it. He had what I might call manners of the mind."

—J.

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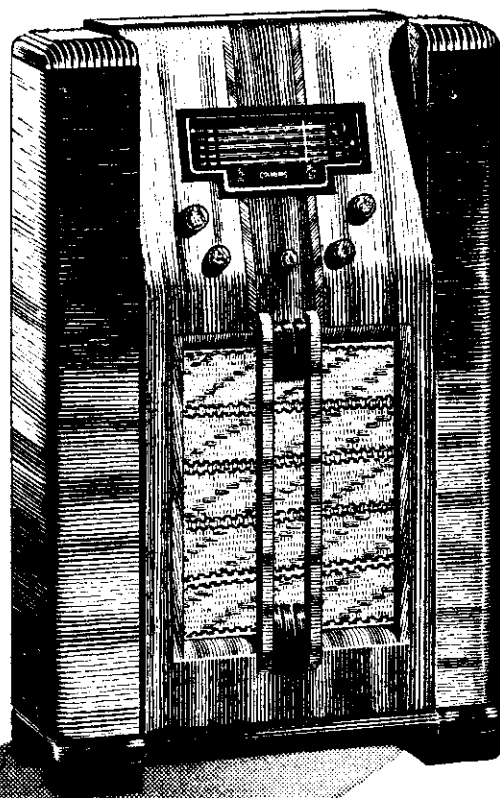
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