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Foster-Parents

MANY of those who read the article about foster-parents in our last issue must have felt as we ourselves did when we read it—astonished to know that this work had been going on for 50 years, and ashamed to think that they themselves had done so little actively to help. But out of sight is out of mind for most of us. If we are not constantly reminded of social problems, we don't give them any thought, and in most cases we forget after a time that they exist. The dullest of us of course know that children who have no homes, or bad homes, or no parents, or bad parents are the responsibility of the rest of the community; but we don't often make it our business to find out how that responsibility is being met. It was not because of anything most of us did that there are state wards in our midst to-day holding honourable and even distinguished places in the community, but it may have been because of something we did not do that there are also continuing failures. We are not all qualified to assist directly: some of us have no house-room, some no head-room, some no heart-room. But we are all qualified to ask ourselves where we stand in such matters, and if only one home in a hundred opened its doors the worst problem of the welfare officers would completely disappear. They would still have failures, since it is not possible to remake in a few months or a few years what neglect or strife or bad habits have so gravely damaged. But they would at least have a chance of separating the inevitable from the unnecessary failures if we gave them a wide enough choice of foster-parents. As matters stand a choice has sometimes to be made between the well-meaning and foolish, the merely foolish, and the foolish who are not as well-meaning as they ought to be.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS**WATER-DIVINING**

Sir,—The writer of your article on water-divining must be biased. He sought to prove the negative case. My father was a well-borer for many years and always used a water-diviner before he put down bores. No water, no pay, was the contract. If one put down a bore anywhere one would only once in a hundred times strike water, but there was never a failure once the water-diviner had located the spot. In one instance, one local body refused to have a diviner as they said it was rubbish. They did not find water. But later others said they would have a diviner and the result was a splendid flow. Another time a bore was put down unsuccessfully only ten feet from where the diviner had said was water. This bore had missed the stream, but when it was put in the right place which the diviner had indicated, there was an abundant supply. Would local councils pay men to locate all their water-bores if they were a failure? Note that it was running water, and maybe this generates electricity which some persons are susceptible to. Hence many of the experiments of your contributor would be a failure; but the results of water-divining are proved beyond all doubt.

A. SUTCLIFFE (Takapuna).

Sir,—It is not generally known that there is an organisation in Great Britain known as the British Society of Dowzers. This organisation, with its headquarters in London, publishes a quarterly journal under the heading of "Radio Perception," and a few of these find their way to this Dominion. In the March number, 1946, there is a most interesting account of an address delivered to the above Society by a lady diviner, who had just returned after spending five years in Ceylon in the employ of the British Government, and if my memory serves me right, apart from other activities she located water supplies for at least 200 military camps during the war.

In the same journal there is an account of an address (which covers 12 pages) to the same Society by a gentleman who had a lifetime experience as a well-borer in Great Britain. This gentleman started out with the usual prejudice against the diviners, but after many years in which he was in close contact with the latter (to use his own expression) "arrived at the conclusion that water divining was a great art."

According to this journal, when the drive for increased production took place in Great Britain, one thing that was insisted upon was good supplies of water on the farms, and in consequence, the geologists and the diviners got together with the object of locating suitable sites for boring operations.

In connection with Mineral Divining, the following is an extract copied from an article that appeared in the South African Mining and Engineering Journal, May 13, 1944:—

There is thus a definite link between dowsing and modern methods of prospecting. Mineralogy, in fact, has added the dowser's modest pendulum, to scientific instruments now in use.

The dowser, with the obvious limitations of his art, cannot compete with geophysical electric magnet, gravimetric, seismic and other scientific methods of prospecting. Yet it might perhaps be said that long before any expensive instruments were introduced, dowers were unconsciously making use of

much the same principles as those on which the latest systems of geophysical prospecting are based.

Dowers have been among the world's pioneer prospectors, and at an earlier period, played no insignificant part in mining history. . . .

It is not impossible that scientific investigation may evolve amplifiers capable of extending the dowser's scope and transferring the art of divining into an exact science. Despite the very precise tools with which the modern prospector is equipped, the dowser, with his special talents, will always find scope for his services wherever an underground stream is required or the existence of a payable mineral deposit is suspected.

Thus it will be seen that those having experience of this art need have no fear of adverse criticism. There is a great unexplored field in this country, waiting to be tackled by experienced water and mineral diviners.

The methods adopted by the Geophysical Branch of Scientific Research may be all right in their place, but for general survey work they are not in it

More letters from listeners will be found on pages 28 and 29

with the experienced diviner, and for this reason, for the benefit of this country, surely it would be better if this Department were to sink their prejudices and fall in with the diviner in a similar manner to that adopted by the geologists in Great Britain.

R. LIVINGSTON (Takanini).

"IMPUDENT IMPOSTORS"

Sir,—For a considerable time we have had *Impudent Impostors*—an instructive and highly entertaining feature—from 32B every Sunday night. This has now ended, and just another murder serial has taken its place. As the average serial—no matter its theme—is murder, it is perhaps reasonable to ask that the authorities arrange for further numbers of *Impudent Impostors* or something like it.

"LISTENER" (Wellington).

"WARSAW CONCERTO"

Sir,—"Constant Reader's" attack on the "Warsaw Concerto" is interesting; it would have been even more interesting a year or so ago before the recent attack by all the musical purists. Is there any valid reason for the belated discovery of the worthlessness of this particular composition? Has the fashion just changed in these matters, or did it change overseas some time ago and is our intelligentsia making the usual frantic rush to catch up on what their gods decree?

I am always astonished at the violence displayed by the music critics: it seems that too intense an interest in music leads to emotion replacing intellect as the determining factor in appreciation. As one of the "musically mentally deficient" (to borrow your correspondent's quotation) I listen with pleasure to the "Warsaw Concerto." But I am no authority on the subject and it may be that I am corrupting my musical taste, if any. But does it matter? May I venture the suggestion that music might, just might, be for one's enjoyment and that, perhaps after all man was

not created just to be a unit in an audience and have music played at him?

Musical pretensions in this country are sadly in need of debunking. They have become the cult above cults. In concluding I must say that I find I am, although musically illiterate, in at least one instance correct. Having long enjoyed hill-billy music, I now discover that all the time I have had a taste for the real folk songs of America! Is this discovery peculiar to Auckland or do Wellington's musically elite also now regard Gene Autry as the sweet singer of the hills?

GORDON INGHAM (Auckland).

Sir,—I congratulate "Constant Reader" on his criticism of the "Warsaw Concerto" and similar pretentious tripe: this is a statement of fact that has been crying out for expression ever since the thing appeared. My explanation of the phenomenon is that with the recent enormous increase of interest in serious music there has been a proportionate increase of those who are incapable of giving, or are not prepared to give, any thought to what they listen to, and derive their enjoyment of music from "sitting back and letting it flow through them and carry them away." (Of this number, to judge by their letters in your issue of September 13, are F. Bloomfield and Mrs. Carter, in spite of their disagreement over the Warsaw compilation). In these highly-commercialised days, therefore, it is to be expected that these people will be taken advantage of by productions whose imposing air of what they have come to regard as "classicism" (save the mark!) recommends them, no matter of what rehash of other people's undesirable qualities the things are compounded. We shall no doubt hear enough Warsaw concerti and Cornish rhapsodies now that the way has been opened up.

To Mr. Bloomfield I would suggest that people who enjoy music most keenly enjoy its beauty by actively following it as a book (that is, by recognising the necessary element of time) rather than by passively appreciating it as a flower; and I would remind him that on this plane the enjoyment got out of music is directly proportional to the effort put in. Enjoyment of music therefore requires a certain minimum technical knowledge, and a person who has this has a mind enquiring enough to decide why he likes or dislikes a work.

As for Mrs. Carter's heroic but misplaced defence, I would advise her not to confuse interpretative artists with original ones. People who record these things are necessarily among either the exploiters or the exploited. If the "Warsaw Concerto" were written only as incidental music to a film (I doubt it), it is a pity that it was ever taken off the soundtrack.

E. de LACEY

(Timaru).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Rob Dagger (Nelson) and Roy C. Smith (Hawera): The Technical section of the NZBS reports that investigation has shown that the interference with 4YA which is complained of is caused by harmonic radiation from an aeronautical beacon station operating at an overseas airfield. The matter has already been taken up with the authorities concerned, and it is hoped that as a result adjustments will be made which will clear the interference at an early date.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENT

Margaret Bradshaw (Upper Hutt): Subject already fully discussed. Cannot be re-opened just now.