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"Monty"

IN ninety-nine cases in a hundred shortening a man's name is like knocking off his hat—bad manners and nothing else; and the more distinguished he is the more offensive such manners always are. In the hundredth case it may bring revelation. Not many of those who will have seen or heard New Zealand's famous guest this week will have thought at the time, or will think afterwards, that they were seeing or listening to the Rt. Hon. Viscount Montgomery, Field-Marshal. Their thoughts would be on "Monty," and Monty himself will be very happy to have it so. It means, as he knows, that the man has followed the soldier into the public mind. For it was the soldier who got there first. In the estimate which we are able to print to-day from the pen of General Kippenberger, Monty, when the New Zealand troops first saw him, was a "little sharp-featured man with cold eyes and a hard voice." He had come not to flatter but to conquer; not to create a legend but to stop a rot; not to build up his own personality but to restore the confidence of a bewildered and badly shattered army. The rest is history. The visitor we have entertained is in General Kippenberger's considered opinion—and there is no more authoritative opinion in New Zealand—the most successful British general since Wellington. But he is also, in the judgment of the same observer, a great man, and "Monty," instead of cheapening him, marks the transformation of the cold-eyed commander into the affectionately remembered saviour of our almost lost cause. He is also of course Monty the eccentric, chiefly by nature but also a little, perhaps, by art. Greatness is always eccentricity up to a point; but the gulf between the big eccentrics and the little ones is never bridged by showmanship. Mannerisms our famous guest certainly has. His only tricks are his habit of trusting his own judgment and his confusing tendency to be right.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS**SPOKEN ENGLISH**

Sir,—I would like to congratulate A. R. D. Fairburn for providing in his article on "Spoken English," real help for New Zealanders who want to improve their speech. A good deal has been written in *The Listener* about New Zealand pronunciation, but mostly it has been of the kind which leaves the reader who is uncertain of his speech, just as muddled as ever, and in addition, often resentful and rebellious. But Mr. Fairburn, as well as explaining how speech faults can be analysed and corrected, shows that "Standard English" is defensible on aesthetic grounds, and has nothing to do with snobbish preference. Broadcast talks, elaborating his ideas, might be a further help.

M. M. ATKINSON

(Eastbourne).

Sir,—Perhaps I should not intrude till the end of Mr. Fairburn's series of articles on "Spoken English," but I feel I must join issue on his idea of "Standard English." I doubt very much that there is such a thing as "Standard English" in the sense of one form of Educated English.

To my mind, there are two kinds of Educated English—Public School English (P.S.E.) and Educated English proper. The first is the speech of the Upper and part of the Middle Classes of the United Kingdom. The conclusive test of what constitutes P.S.E. is whether or not it is affected by local speech—i.e., whether or not by listening to a speaker one can determine what part of the country he comes from. There is no variation in P.S.E. between North and South England, or Wales, Ireland and Scotland. (Parenthetically, nearly all the Highland chiefs speaking to their clans over the BBC spoke P.S.E.)

The urge to adopt this form of speech by sections of the middle and working classes is undoubtedly the result of the social stratification of England. It is often a handicap to obtaining a job not to speak P.S.E. To speak it serves to conceal lowly social origins. It is, thus, largely wound up with snobbery, though not all P.S.E. speakers are snobs.

It is not pretended that there are no variations in P.S.E. Obviously there are. On the one hand men like Winston Churchill speak P.S.E. in a quite unaffected way and on the other we have more self-conscious—lah-di-dah, if you like—speakers like Professor Joad, Bertrand Russell, some parsons, BBC announcers, and Oxford dons. But these are idiosyncratic variations and not a result of the influence of local speech.

P.S.E. is not merely free from grammatical solecisms (Educated English is that also) but must conform to certain cadences and intonations. There are certain turns of phrase, clichés even, which are considered desirable, and, more important still, certain words or phrases (e.g., "serviette" for "table napkin") considered quite damning.

Many speakers of Educated English on the other hand, though grammatically correct and free from the broader pronunciations of dialect, do betray their place of origin in their speech. No one could fail to recognise Col. Walter Elliott, M.P., or Professor Gryffyd, M.P., as Scottish or Welsh respectively, any more than BBC commentators like Alistair Cook, Joseph Harsch, and Raymond Swing could be anything but American. Yet all of them speak "Educated English." If the speech of such diverse speakers as the above is to be

called standard then the standard must be very elastic indeed. It is not only that there must be considerable differences of accent, pronunciation and cadence, but also of idiom. Let us in New Zealand not worry about Standard or P.S. English. Let us teach our children Educated New Zealand English with emphasis on good grammar, clear articulation from well-opened lips, pure vowels (we ought to be able, for example, to improve on the horrible New Zealand and P.S.E. "O") and pure diphthongs. Let cadence and intonation look after themselves.

R. G. B. LAWSON (Kerikeri).

CONCERT PROGRAMMES

Sir,—In order to enable listeners who, like myself, do not know a great deal about music, to appreciate the concerts given by our National Symphony Orchestra to a greater extent, would it not be possible to make the programmes available in advance? Perhaps, as in the case of the Wellington Chamber Music Society, they could be issued with the tickets.

This would allow intending patrons to study the programme notes much more thoroughly and intelligently than is possible in a crowded hall immediately before the concert.

I should also like to suggest that, if this could be done, the programme notes themselves might be made a little fuller and more descriptive of the music itself rather than the circumstances under which it was composed. Perhaps, in the case of symphonic works, it might even be possible to include one or two of the main themes.

I feel sure that a great many listeners would appreciate such an opportunity of making some prior acquaintance with the music to be heard, and thus greatly increasing their enjoyment of the concert itself. STUDENT (Eastbourne).

(Concert programmes, at the moment, cannot be published in advance, but next season it is hoped that this will be possible in some cases.—Ed.)

DRAGON OF WANTLY

Sir,—May I ask through you the origin or history of the "Dragon of Wantly." Those who admire the works of the two greatest Victorian novelists, Trollope and Surtees, will remember the inn in the former author's Barchester series. Also named after the "Dragon" is the young farmer's horse which Mr. Facey Romford borrowed and used in rather cavalier fashion in his first mastership of hounds with the Heavysides. Surtees spells the word "Wantly."

VINCENT COUNTY (Wellington).

OFF THE CHAIN.

Sir,—My attention has been called to an article in your issue of June 20 by Dorian Saker. In that article, by a

BROADCASTS FROM CANADA

The following details of programmes to be directed to Australia and New Zealand next Sunday, July 20, by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's International Service we received by cable as we went to press:

7.45 p.m. (N.Z. time): Listeners' Corner.

8.0: News.

8.15: Interviews with members of the Australian Davis Cup team which recently arrived in Canada.

8.30: Concert from Canada.

8.45: "Cross Section": Interviews with typical Canadians.

Frequencies: 11.72 m/c/s, 25.6 metres, and 9.61 m/c/s, 31.22 metres. Regular programmes will be heard every Sunday on the same frequencies at the same times.

somewhat dexterous confusion of issues, and under the cloak of a classical discourse on Saturnalia, your contributor makes a defence of certain student activities "once a year." Mr. Saker knows perfectly well that there is only one material objection taken to "Cappicade" and its attendant performances—and that criticism begins and ends in what he so aptly calls "bawdiness" and "pornography," that bawdiness and pornography, flagrant and unashamed in which the men and women of Victoria University College are said to join in yearly "Saturnalia." The issue is perfectly clear.

The 1947 "Cappicade" lived so well up to Mr. Saker's views of what is fit and proper and appropriate "once a year" that, in my opinion, it came under the ban of the Indecent Publications Act. There was a time, some years ago, when Bacchanalians themselves, without scruples as to their manners and habits, yet thought twice about making a song in their praise. Your contributor appears to applaud that song. He goes back 2,000 years of civilisation and he claims no progress in morals and manners.

This frankness and these manners seem to disclose a very "modern" lack of moral and artistic sense. Conduct which is tragedy when applied to the

WE are compelled to warn correspondents again that long letters are not likely to be printed. A letter is long when it exceeds 300 words.

lives of our own friends and relatives is artistically sorry stuff for comedy when applied to the lives of other people.

If Mr. Saker's studies in Saturnalia had been related to studies in morals and the application of principle to human "behaviour" he would at least have recognised the fact that he was toying with a difficult and, even, a dangerous subject. I think your contributor should be made aware that any sincere attempt to understand drainage-mindedness past or present, may have merit, but an attempt to persuade us that it smells sweet is an offence.

Had Mr. Saker's researches been directed to the history of Capping Carnivals even at V.U.C. he might have found humour and high spirits, without "bawdiness." He would certainly have found something more artistic and less boring and repetitive and feeble than "Cappicade" of 1947.

F. A. DE LA MARE (Hamilton).

SILENT PRAYER

Sir,—It has evidently not occurred to your viewsreel commentator that Big Ben's chimes were not introduced to the listeners of this country merely in order that they may experience "a sentimental attachment" to them. He says that "during the war we in New Zealand needed Big Ben," but now he seeks to dispense with that sacred minute on the grounds that the war has been ended "almost two years." I would point out to your commentator that the day will never dawn when we can dispense with such moments as that in which Big Ben calls us to silent prayer. Indeed, prayer, more earnest and more often, is the hope of the world to-day. LISTENER (Morrisville).

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

Peter Hammond (Dargaville): You bark up the wrong tree. The man you criticise was born in New Zealand of New Zealand parents, went to school here, and has worked most of his life here.

Subscriber (Gisborne) and Keen Listener (Hastings): Your wish will soon be granted.