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BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

BRYAN O'BRIEN'S BOOK OF BIRDS AND BEASTS, illustrated by Joan Smith, Price 6/6.

Every child knows Bryan O'Brien's stories and thousands have bought his previous books. This delightful book (which will be ready for Christmas) has extremely attractive illustrations all in colour.

FIRST CHEAP EDITION OF SPEAKING CANDIDLY, Films and People in New Zealand, by Gordon Mirams (G.M. of "The Listener"). Now 7/6.

Speaking Candidly has had an enthusiastic reception far beyond New Zealand. "The best book," says C. A. Lejeune, of the London "Observer" (and the most distinguished film commentator in London) "ever written on the films by any British critic." The cheap edition is bound in cloth and has all the original illustrations.

THE WAY OUT, a Kiwi Escapes in Italy, by Malcolm J. Mason, 14/6.

Three books, Gunner Inglorious, by Jim Henderson; Farewell Campo XII, by the late Brigadier Hargest; and The Way Out, by Malcolm Mason, are likely to survive as records of what New Zealanders can do. The Way Out is a thrilling account of a resourceful New Zealander's nine months behind the German lines.

ONE WORLD OR NONE, by the men who made the Atomic bomb, 8/9.

This book is not holiday reading; but the grim facts of the present situation interest many—and perhaps should interest more of us.

AND FOR CHILDREN

THE BOOK OF WIREMU, by Stella Morice, illustrated by Nancy Bolton, 5/6.

Still the outstanding New Zealand children's book; and shortly to be presented to an American audience by the Pilgrim Press of Boston.

RADIO VIEWSREEL What Our Commentators Say

Was My Face Grey?

I HAVE just finished listening to the second instalment of 2YD's *Grey Face*, which is just my cup of tea, or, as the culture-hound might prefer to put it, my shot of coke. It has everything, a heroine who is scatty and an ex-newspaper reporter (though it is a secret between her late employer and herself whether she is an ex because she is scatty or merely because she gave up her Career to marry the hero), bright yet unsubtle repartee, and a sleuth who makes up for his lack of finesse by being completely indestructible. On our last corpse detective and hero discovered a note saying, "If you want to know who did it look in the desk of my flat in Half-Moon Street," whereupon, without waiting for or even summoning the hand-writing expert the two proceed, at dead of night, without even a spare battery for the flashlight, to their Assigination with Anubis. (I forgot to mention that there is also an Egyptian motif.) However, they survive this adventure and live to make an appointment with Dr. Death (an actual character, not a personification), and at the end of the episode are rewarded with an intimation that Dr. Death is a co-member with the mysterious Grey Face of the Brotherhood of the Jackal, a conclusion which I feel sure the heroine would have reached by swift feminine intuition the moment she heard that unfortunate moniker. However, it's easy to recover a sense of proportion in these matters after being brought to earth by the Wellington District Weather Report, but during the previous half-hour I must admit that my critical faculties were somewhat corroded by the creepiness of the atmosphere.

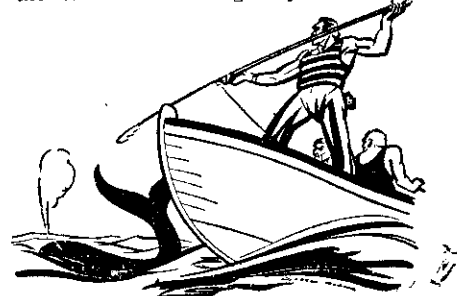
Stories of To-day

ELSIE K. MORTON has the journalist's gift for telling a good story, and she had a good story to tell last Tuesday morning in the first of her talks *Stories of South Westland*, when she gave an account of the near-tragedy of October 29, 1943, when a Tiger Moth containing three sightseeing Waifs made a forced landing actually on the Franz Josef Glacier, a recital that I found far more moving than the immediately following *Life of Elizabeth Gunning*, though the latter could boast two deathbeds and a spectacularly triumphant conclusion. I am no Cicero, and the age I live in moves me far more than those other ages when I have not been and shall not be. If "A Black Day and a Miracle" was no mere lucky dip into the limbo of forgotten things, but evidence of expert angling then I foresee a series of pleasant and profitable Tuesday mornings.

Pungent History

DR. McLINTOCK, whose talks on early Otago I have recommended before, has a gift not always vouchsafed to speakers who present us with the facts of history; he can conjure up a vivid picture of the people, places, and events he describes. This seems to be due more to the power of the written than the spoken word, for Dr. McLintock's radio style, though clear, is a little on the aloof side, and he has not been helped by the fact that records

were made of the talks—for when the needle gets "in the groove" and phrases are repeated, the illusion of listening directly to a speaker is shattered, and the talk becomes a mechanical thing. Such is not the case with the subject-matter of these talks, nor with the historian's racy account of it. Indeed, in the case of "Whaling Days Along the



Otago Coast," the mental picture of the desecration of the Leaches under the onslaught of the whalers was more than sufficient to fill my living-room with the smell of rancid fat, decaying whale flesh, and cooking blubber; and with the image in my mind of what the men had to undergo in the process of rendering their catch fit for the market, so that richer firms in Australia could reap the financial benefit of their labours, I felt more than an affinity with these early whalers, and readily forgave them, as did Dr. McLintock, any historical predilection they may have exhibited for the temporary oblivion of alcohol.

Conclusions Inconclusive

I THOUGHT the participants in 2YA's latest discussion, "What Do We Expect of Our Secondary Schools?" were about as anxious as shadow boxers to come to grips with their subject. At the finish each speaker was still repeating with variations of pitch and phrasing his original canon. Mr. Caradus's line—"If there is anything wrong with our secondary schools—and, mind you, I am not satisfied that there is"—naturally led on to its counter-theme represented by the two commercial gentlemen, with their refrain "Typists can't spell." And so back, without elaboration of the response "Need they, or are there more important things to learn?" to Mr. Caradus's line. When granted an opportunity Messrs. Dawson and Bardsley would duet on Staff Difficulty with the earnestness of pre-war Britannic matrons discussing the Servant Problem, until shepherded back by the conductor chairman to make their contribution to the *tutti*. Towards the end of the performance loftier notes were struck ("Worthy citizens of a sound democracy" was, I think, Mr. Cousins's phrase), but for all the chairman's bold batonship the odour of sanctity was not quite strong enough to disguise the hint of red herrings.

The 'Ampstead Way

AS Pisa is to the Leaning Tower, or the island of St. Helena to Napoleon, so Hampstead is, not to one particular fact or feature, but to a whole host of them. Just how many and varied these connections are I had not realised until I heard them assembled in a programme on Hampstead—"The Inner Suburb"—in the BBC series *This is*

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