

houses; and you would not see past their clothes and furniture if you looked at them with the eyes with which you look at Blenheim.

"This is not Blenheim," one of them said to me up the Wairau. "It is Marlborough." (To my surprise he said Muhl not Mawl).

"But Blenheim is the centre of Marlborough."

"No, it is Marlborough's market place. Marlborough has no centre."

"Surely Blenheim means Marlborough to most people."

"Only to visitors and strangers."

"Then where are the people of Marlborough?"

"Here in the homesteads. We settled it, and we still own it."

"But you can't live without the others."

"We don't try to. But we don't lose ourselves among them."

"You deliberately hold aloof?"

"Not aloof. We are all friends. But Marlborough is a pastoral province and we are the pastoralists."

It was not said rudely or with any kind of uppishness. It was just a statement of the facts as he saw them, which were as plain to him as the difference between a Corriedale and a Romney. But it meant, if he was right, that Marlborough is going backwards instead of forwards, since it was a single community once and is that no longer.

* * *

I WAS sitting on the balcony of a hotel in Murchison when five boys stopped at a shop window across the street, all of them about the same age and the same size; perhaps six, perhaps a little older. The magnet seemed to be

FROM A BALCONY some mechanical toys which each perhaps hoped he would find in his

stocking on Christmas morning. They were not quarrelling; not even boasting of what they had or would have or hoped to have; just flattening their noses on the window pane and letting their fancies wander. That was the situation one second. The next, a boy who was carrying his shoes in his hand brought them down with all his force on the head of the only boy who had shoes on his feet—a vicious blow delivered without warning and with obvious malice.

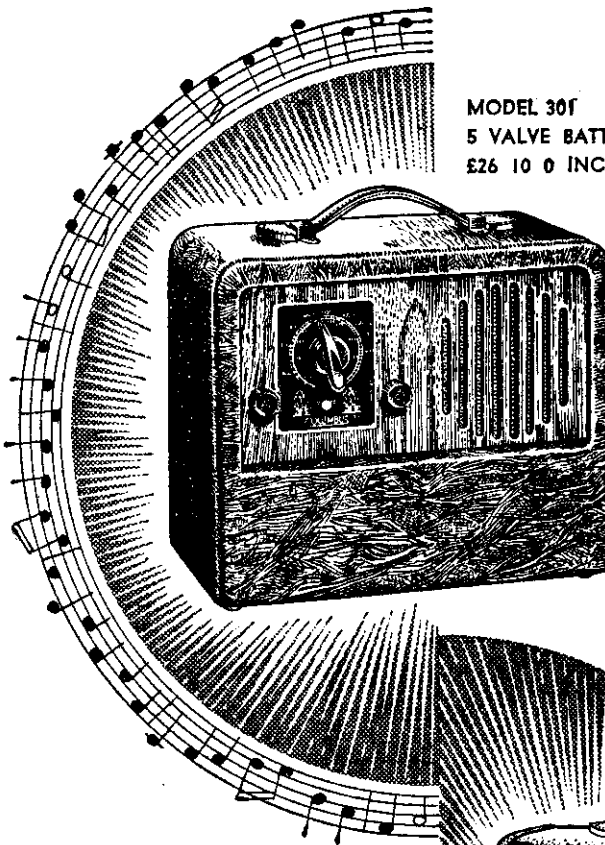
The victim unfortunately burst into tears, and at once received a second blow as hard as the first. Then a third boy turned on the aggressor, but not soon enough. Before he could be seized or even hit he had detached himself with considerable skill and was away like a hare for home.

That was the first scene. In the second the injured boy, whose sole offence seemed to be that he had better clothes than the others and wore his shoes on his feet, dried his eyes and walked away with his defender's arm thrown protectively over his shoulder.

And that, I thought, was the world. That was balance of power and our hope of collective security. It was the distance we still are from united nations. It was envy and an inferiority complex; burning jealousy rising to unbridled hate; softness at the mercy of toughness; war without warning; help that was too little and too late. If that soft boy ever becomes tough it will be at the expense of what is gentle and kind in him now. If he ever learns to tolerate his aggressor it will be a one-sided toleration with contempt on the other side.

(To be continued)

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