

DECEMBER 17, 1948

Into the World

IT is a humiliating thought that animals and savages can find their way where civilised man loses himself. Civilised man has never given up asking himself what is good for his children. If he knew the answer he would not know beyond question how to apply it. But savages know, and animals know, and there is never any conflict between their instincts and their methods. They rear other savages and other animals equipped at every point for the life they themselves have led. Civilised man has never been able to do that. It is sufficient to listen about this time every year to school break-up speeches to realise how bewildered most parents are, and how little confidence even teachers have that they are following the right track. When these speeches are more than mere pleasantries they are usually cloudy and contradictory, not because the speakers are dull and ignorant, but because they are attempting more than anybody has the ability to bring off. We are especially confused in New Zealand at the present time because one system of education has been pulled up by the roots and another has not had time to establish itself. But only the dull and lazy among us have ever been satisfied with the work of our schools. Those who are loudest in condemnation of the new education have forgotten that it is the answer to the blunders and evils of the old education, and that they were not silent about those either. Nor do those who support the new methods support them without qualification. They know that children are happier at school to-day than they used to be, and therefore healthier; that the syllabus is more flexible and comprehensive and the use made of it more rational. But they know that what education has gained in humanity and common-sense it has paid for in slackness. Though pupils are no longer afraid of their teachers they are afraid of their problems, go round instead of over their hurdles, or turn aside and go somewhere else. The savage who does that has a lean, and often a short, life.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

"PARLIAMENTARY ENGLISH."

Sir,—In a recent number of *The Listener* a correspondent who signs himself "Marcus Aurelius" says that "he thinks he remembers" my recommendation, in a broadcast, that "controversy" should be pronounced with the stress on the second syllable, "controversy." Well, I wish to say that your correspondent's memory must have played him false for I have never made such a recommendation, either in print or over the air. If he will consult my *New Zealand English* he will find my recommendation to be quite different from this: "controversy." No respectable authority recommends the sinful "controversy."

ARNOLD WALL (Sumner).

PERPETUAL EMOTION.

Sir,—As one interested in the serial *My Husband's Love* I am certainly in agreement with "Fed Up"—that it seems as though this story will never finish. It must have been going on for close on two years now. It is certainly very interesting, but there is much that could be cut, reducing the story to the proportions of other radio serials which usually last about three or four months. In this serial we often get 10 minutes of the story while the rest of the time is taken up by useless music.

BEDREST CASE (Auckland).

GOLD ON THE WEST COAST.

Sir,—In his recent talk Douglas Cresswell was surely in error when he gave the year of discovery of gold on the West Coast as 1864. Condliffe's *History of New Zealand* also gives that year, as does the *New Zealand Official Year Book*.

John Rochfort, surveyor, found gold on the Buller River in November, 1859, five years before the date given by Mr. Cresswell—and there are said to be earlier discoveries than Rochfort's. One by Tarapuhi is recorded in the *Nelson Examiner* of April 17, 1858. Both these finds were made in Nelson province. In August, 1861, gold was being worked in the Waimangaroa by about 60 diggers, mostly Maoris, and in the same year payable gold was being won in the Inangahua.

CANTNEL (Gisborne).

RADIO PLAYS.

Sir,—Listening to the discussion on radio plays broadcast from 2YA on November 22, I observed among the speakers two different views on the subject, J. C. Fisher being (I thought) reactionary and John Gundry and Lloyd Lamble slightly progressive. However, their opinions may have been curbed by the former's rather vehement stipulations for the production of such plays. He said that plays are necessarily a medium for portraying life, yet immediately condemned the present-day frequent use of sound effects and particularly background music as an adulteration of the art. Surely music is a background of our life, not only in the home but even at work, where a tune may return repeatedly to the individual's consciousness? Certain situations suggest appropriate tunes or songs to most of us. Just as a theatre-goer accepts stage conventions without second thought, so, I believe, listeners can and do accept sound effects as an integral part of a radio play.

It was conceded by Mr. Fisher that a script or character could be improved by the actors or producer, but not by the effect of music. To me, music in a radio play provides some of the atmosphere which is lacking through the absence of flesh and blood. The listener must have not only characters but also a feeling of the situation, before he can picture intelligently in his mind the incidents presented to him. It is not that sound effects do not encourage the listener to think for himself—he must have the raw material there before he can construct his thoughts. Appropriate music is the ideal medium for conveying that necessary feeling.

It was mentioned that a radio play (I do not know whether serials or single

THE KING'S BROADCAST

STATION 2YA Wellington and the four ZB stations will remain on the air after midnight on December 25 to broadcast the BBC special Christmas Programme and the King's Message. The BBC programme begins at 2.0 a.m. on Boxing Day (New Zealand time) and the King will speak at 3.0 a.m. Stations will close down at 3.15 a.m. (approximately). The King's speech will be heard again from the YA stations at 7.15 a.m., while both YA and YZ stations will broadcast the BBC Programme and the speech at 9.0 a.m., and the speech only at 12.30 and 6.45 p.m.

episode plays were meant) should follow the form of the novel, but is not the short story of the O. Henry type, with its final bang, more adaptable, even within the episodes of a serial?

The panel skimmed over the topic of actors not putting enough feeling into their part. I think that too much feeling is often put into the spoken word, and that more moderation is needed with voice control in most radio plays, and particularly in serials. After all, our lives are not quite melodramas.

"BURNS FERRIER" (Napier).

BACK TO THE CRADLE.

Sir,—I have read with great interest your collection of interviews on "Back to the Cradle." In the main, those interviewed point scornful fingers at Dr. Thouless and his theories, yet I think that if further inquiry were made his opinion would be found not an isolated oddity, but the opinion of a growing number of investigators in the field of pediatrics.

I think it would be unfair to Dr. Thouless to infer that he meant that a child should be fed every time it cries. What he is trying to say is that it is wrong to wait until the clock strikes one if the baby is roaring at 12.30. The mother gets into a state and the baby could not be in a good condition to feed after a half-hour howl. I think the attempted slavish adherence to routine has probably had much to do with the failure in natural feeding that characterises the present age of infant care.

As one mother points out, a child soon makes its own routine if gently

persuaded but every child is different and must be treated accordingly. While the Plunket Society does excellent work, I think a tendency to generalise and make every child conform to a pattern has spoiled a good deal of their excellent work. But the Plunket Society is progressive, and has already modified and adapted many of its ideas. Therefore its officials should be a little more moderate in the expression of anti-Thouless views. I question whether Dr. Thouless would just try to be different.

Meanwhile, if I think my baby needs a little soothing on odd occasions I shall give her a sly rock and a pat—and sneak her a bottle at 4.0 a.m. if I think she'd really like it.

PROSPECTIVE MOTHER
(Havelock North).

BAND MUSIC

Sir,—I heartily agree with the suggestion of Tom L. Mills (Feilding) (*Listener*, November 5) that the Wellington Citadel Salvation Army Band is worthy of recording for overseas entertainment. As a regular follower of radio band music I would place in the same category the Newton Citadel Band at Auckland, which I consider equal to the Salvationist Publishing and Supplies Band, as recorded. Another combination which merits similar notice is the Wellington South Salvation Army Band, where the standard of play has been raised considerably in recent years.

G. R. HILL (Auckland).

LATE NIGHT JAZZ

Sir,—A series of jazz programmes by the Graham Bell Jazz Group has just concluded from the Australian National Stations—which were linked for each broadcast. The programmes were broadcast weekly about 7.0 p.m. Australian time, and one can often pick up a compared recorded jazz half-hour also about 7.0 p.m. Australian time. Radio New Zealand transmits a half-hour of *Rhythm on Record* at 8.0 p.m. Friday (New Zealand time), and one may assume that this is widely listened to in Australia as two-thirds of the letters concerning the test broadcasts came from there. *Rhythm on Record* would be received at 6.0 p.m. Australian time. Why, therefore, are jazz and swing programmes for New Zealand consumption always broadcast after 9.30 p.m., when listening is beginning to drop off?

CURIOUS (Gisborne).

LANDSCAPE AND SEASCAPE

Sir,—Having listened to one or two instalments in the ZB series *Landscape in Words and Music* one wonders how programmes like these continue. To me they fail completely in the ideas and picture they try to portray. Surely it would be better to have one of New Zealand's poets write the descriptive piece—as in the National Film Unit's recent production "The Coast"—than have to listen to the drab, lifeless and often hackneyed phraseology at present broadcast? J.D.T. (Wellington).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

"Jay" (Manurewa): "Grand Canyon" Suite (Ferde Grofé); "La Golaandrina" (Seriadelli). "Lover of Sacred Music" (Nelson): The recordings in which you are interested are to be broadcast by 4XD Dunedin on December 30, and from 4YZ Invercargill on December 26.

Alpha (Mosgiel): Maintenance work is being carried out at present on the 2YA mast at Titahi Bay and the station is operating on a temporary aerial during daylight hours. Reception should be normal during the evenings.