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Victoria College

WE have not often been happier about a contribution than we are about the article in this issue by Dr. J. C. Beaglehole commemorating the Jubilee of Victoria College. While it would be wrong to give the College all the credit for producing the writer of that article—ungrateful to his parents and a blindness to all the other influences that have worked on him during the last 48 years—he is the eloquent and generous answer to his own question about the meaning of Victoria College to the community. It has focussed the light in him and enriched the feeling; made him in short a truly educated man. If it makes him squirm to have such crude things said about him that is the test of their truthfulness. Of how many of his fellow graduates we could say the same if we knew them well enough we could only guess; but the number does not matter. When a University brings one first-rate mind to full capacity it brings many more to a point only a little below that, and in those two ways abundantly justifies its existence. But no one really wonders whether Victoria College has given the community a return for its money. No intelligent person ever asks whether knowledge pays. The question Dr. Beaglehole asks is what the College has done over and above the turning out of sometimes eminent, sometimes merely competent, persons equipped technically for public service. His answer will mean more to graduates of Victoria College than to others; will stir them more than it will others; and will mean something a little different to them than he will even wish it to mean to others. But it must be read in his own words. Our sole purpose in this column is to direct attention not merely to what he says but to the manner in which he says it, and to reduce the number of readers who might otherwise miss the deep satisfaction of reading him.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, MAY 13

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

STUDIO RELIGIOUS SERVICE

Sir,—May I, through you, offer my congratulations to those who were responsible for the conception and broadcasting of the Presbyterian Service from 2YA this Sunday evening, May 1. It was obvious that a great deal of thought, based on real scholarship, had gone to the writing of the script, and it was encouraging and inspiring to hear some of the most profound truths of religion expressed in simple dignified English, and with none of the stock clichés that are still so often used elsewhere and which tend to repel the ordinary man. I hope those who were responsible for this broadcast will be encouraged to make more of the same kind.

C. N. MACLEAN (Wanganui).

"NEW ZEALAND'S NAVAL STORY"

Sir,—I have scant fault to find with the review in your magazine of my book, but would suggest to the writer that, in such criticism as he considers needed, *quot homines*, etc., would obviate a tendency to find fault.

The book is wholly and solely concerned with naval vessels armed for war purposes, and therefore there is no point in your reviewer's complaint that Captain Scott's three vessels were omitted. Funds for Scott's expedition were contributed by the British public, and grants were made by the British, Australian, New Zealand, and South African Governments, and the actual sponsors were Sir Clements Markham and the Royal Geographical Society—the Admiralty were concerned merely in giving leave to the ranks and ratings to join the expedition.

In his book *Captain Scott* Stephen Gwynn states: "It was due to his (Scott's) persistence that the small naval nucleus originally contemplated spread till the ship's company was recruited almost entirely from the Royal Navy."

Scott is recorded by Mr. Gwynn as saying: "From an early date I had set my mind on obtaining a naval crew. I felt sure that their sense of discipline would be an immense acquisition, and I had grave doubts as to my own ability to deal with any other class of men."

T. D. TAYLOR (Wellington).

FRANCES HODGKINS

Sir,—Does P. D'E. Hodgkins, replying to Margaret Frankel, make the mistake of exalting the undoubted *charm* of his sister's earlier work above the sterner achievement of her maturity? If in saying it would be unjust to her to exhibit certain of her work, he means works characteristic of her great last period, then he sets at nought the culmination, the goal of the artist's development, the realisation of her whole lifetime's effort. (The mood is magnificent.)

I, as a member of her public, welcome any "injustice" I may be subjected to in seeing any of Frances Hodgkins's work at all, most especially if it be occasioned by the work of her maturity.

M. T. WOOLLASTON

(Upper Moutere).

Sir,—Her brother and the Canterbury Art Society are surely right in thinking it would be unjust to his sister and to the New Zealand public to show some of her more modern work in New Zealand. The public should be protected

from such "hopelessly poor results" and the Government should not allow them to be brought into the country.

Her brother, at this distance and with such opportunities for seeing her work, knows much better than the London critic who concluded a long article "up to a few months before her death she was painting better than she had ever painted." Nor should we be misled by the other London critic who claimed she was the "best woman painter ever to have lived in England." If there is any truth in such a claim it is only for the reason that so few of New Zealand woman painters have ever had the opportunity of living in England. In this nation of great painters the expatriate Frances Hodgkins was but a pigmy, and the same can be said of that over-rated cartoonist, David Low.

R.P. (Wellington).

Sir,—Though most appreciative to hear the suggestions put forward by Frances Hodgkins's brother, I differ in part with his opinion. Frances Hodgkins's early work is of no consequence and would be of little or no use to the public if it were exhibited, for it represents an outlook which the artist had outgrown at the cost of such great pains as only Frances Hodgkins knew. The achievements in her later work speak of such relentless self-criticism and conscience that I am left with no doubts as to the integrity of every single painting which passed the artist's later judgment of fire, even if it was to heat the room up on a very cold day. From her early work the public would gain nothing more than the assurance that at home Frances Hodgkins was a homely girl, who painted landscape landscapes and flowery flower-pieces, just as nice as the ones they see from year to year. May fate spare us from the interference of well-meaning and most respected relatives when we can no longer speak for ourselves.

THEO SCHOON (Christchurch).

WEATHER FORECASTS.

Sir,—I never cease to be astonished on picking up *The Listener* each week to find that, so far, apparently no one has written to protest against this North Island preference in weather forecasts.

"This is the Weather Office." This cheery announcement pricks my ears, and those of probably thousands of others, but I have yet to meet the man living south of 41 degrees latitude who has succeeded in enduring the tedious rigmarole starting at Auckland down through National Park-Taihape to Wellington. My own experience has been that I collect my wits just in time each

CRICKET COMMENTARIES

FOR the remainder of the tour of the New Zealand Cricket team in England, the Main National stations will broadcast each Wednesday at 9.19 p.m. a ten-minute review of the week's play by Jack Lamason. There will ordinarily be two matches to be noticed, but Mr. Lamason's commentary will not be in any sense a full review of the week's performance. Rather, in the light of his experience on English wickets and playing against English cricketers, he will discuss in an after-the-game style some of the highlights of the preceding week.

morning or evening to hear the forecast for the Chatham Islands. In fact I am possibly one of the best-informed radio listeners on the subject of the weather over the Chathams.

North Island preference for Empire Games; North Island preference for Tourist Publicity, and maybe for an Overseas Air Terminal: it would be refreshing to have a small preference for the South Island—even if only in the matter of weather forecasts. When I was in the Army we had to line up for pay in alphabetical order. Every now and again the Sergeant-Major, to the delight of the Williamsons, Wilsons and Watsons, and the chagrin of the Abbotts, Andersons, and Arbuthnots, would give us the order "About turn," and we would be paid starting at the other end. Now then, couldn't the same principle be applied to the weather forecasts? Auckland first one day, and the Chathams first the next. What about it?

NIB-NAB (Christchurch).

TILLERS OF THE SOIL.

Sir,—When listening to the interesting broadcast of 2ZB's *Citizens' Forum* recently I heard one of the speakers say that very often people who had been regarded as belonging to the category of "simple tillers of the soil and such like," had with a little help become engineers, teachers, etc. I understood from this that generally speaking we have come to consider that manual work is in some way inferior to the more intellectual pursuits.

Surely the highest value ought to be put upon work which is most necessary. And when all is said and done, no matter how far we advance on any given line of progress, eat we must. The one thing on which we depend is food. The farm worker is, therefore, essentially necessary, and as such he ought to be highly valued. Does it not appear to be a fact that because we have failed to keep our sense of proportion and have come to under-value the farm labourer, we find it difficult to staff our farms?

The civilisation which is more concerned about its entertainment than about the production of its food is indeed sadly lacking in proportion. We appear to be willing to pay and to honour entertainers a great deal more than those upon whom we are almost entirely dependent for the very bed-rock means of existence.

M.K.R. (Wellington).

LEVITATION

Sir,—Your correspondent "Argosy" says that the levitation of Daniel Douglas Home was a fraud. How does he know when he wasn't there to see the demonstration? The levitation of articles—tables and so forth—has been going on for years and witnessed by reputable people of intelligence. A recent photograph depicts a medium suspended several feet from the floor with no visible means of support. Of course, your sceptic will always find some ingenious explanation of such a phenomenon, which is usually more extraordinary than the phenomenon itself. However, in the case of Home, I believe that his type of phenomenon was witnessed by an eminent scientist, who was not likely to be fooled by some obvious trickery.

G. H. HIGNETT
(Devonport).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A.A.K. (Mt. Albert): Correspondence closed.
L.M.H.B.: Thank you. We agree that silent remembrance would be better than such vulgar desecration.