

Beauty and the Bath

Ataway brings beauty to your bath.
Ataway is the cleansing cream made
to the famous
White Lily formula that
whisks away every trace
of scum and stain, but
cannot scratch the
finest porcelain.

S. W. Peterson & Co. Ltd.

ATAWAY

Bath and Household
Cleanser



A Publisher Talks to a Bookseller

SIR STANLEY UNWIN who is now in New Zealand knows more about publishing and the book trade in every country than any other individual, and thus has a right to be heard on all subjects connected with books and their distribution; a right which he exercises with vigour and authority.

In particular his knowledge of British books abroad is extensive and peculiar. Its foundations were laid before the first Great War when he spent some time as a traveller selling books to German booksellers. "I had to sell my books on firm sale, whereas the German bookseller was accustomed to getting his stock on sale or return. I had to be very eloquent—in German." Since those days in Germany Sir Stanley has founded his own publishing firm and built up a vast list of books both scholarly and popular. But he has found time to travel too and there is scarcely a country in the world in which he does not know the bookshops. His knowledge of international publishing has been recognised by the publishers of all nations who elected him President of the International Publishers' Congress. Scotland recognised his services to learning with a doctorate from Aberdeen and this was followed in 1946 by a Knighthood.

Someone has called Sir Stanley the Pontiff of British Publishing, and it is a name he doesn't favour. Indeed it is unfair, so much grace and urbanity is combined with his knowledge and authority. But there is some appropriateness in the term: his impressive bearded profile recalls an El Greco portrait of some notable Pope.

Britain's Amazing Recovery

We spoke first of publishing in England. The resilience of the British publishing trade, as described by Sir Stanley Unwin, has certainly been amazing. Its output in 1938 was valued at £10,000,000. In 1948 it was over £30,000,000. The export trade has increased during the same period from £3,500,000 to £9,000,000. All this in spite of the millions of books lost in the blitz.

It clearly emerges from these figures that the consumption of books in Britain itself has increased in even greater proportion than the exports, and I asked Sir Stanley if this increase was being maintained in the absence of war conditions (which gave many people special opportunities for reading by making other forms of entertainment difficult). He replied: "The figures are not only being maintained but further increased."

I had believed that improvement in educational standards was probably largely responsible for the increase in reading and had often wondered whether the increase in reading in Britain had brought with it some relaxation of standards in quality. I mentioned the coming of compulsory primary education in Britain in the first years of this century and the way in which newspaper circulations were suddenly lifted from

An interview with
SIR STANLEY UNWIN
by Blackwood Paul

hundreds of thousands to millions. This revolution in the world of newspapers was accompanied by a decline in standards. Was the same process now affecting the book? Would circulations go up but quality come down?

Sir Stanley was certain that standards were not suffering. He instanced the vast sales of, for instance, Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* and of the Phaidon Press books on art as examples of interest in serious books. "The sales of my own firm's publications, which do not include much fiction, have increased threefold since 1938 and our list is not likely to share in any boom in trash."

New Zealand Drops Behind

Knowing Sir Stanley's encyclopaedic knowledge of the markets for British books, I asked him how we measured up per head of population in our purchase of British books. "You certainly lag behind South Africa, which purchased in 1948 about one-and-a-quarter million pounds worth of books. And I think you probably now lag behind the British as well. Relatively your position has declined. At one time you ranked high as book buyers, though not perhaps as high as your own publishers have claimed."

"Why do you think we have fallen behind?"

"The main reason is your import restrictions on books. For there is no other apparent reason why your community should be falling behind in interest in the things of the mind. Restricted imports reduce the choice of books which is put before readers and this is most serious for the public. The bookseller should be encouraged to show and stock a wide variety of books of all kinds. But the tendency of restrictions must be to encourage booksellers to concentrate on best sellers."

"That may well suggest another question. I remember an essay of yours written about 12 years ago in which you lamented the comparative lack of interest in learned works shown by the Australian market compared with the British one. Would that lament still be necessary? And did it apply to New Zealand too?"

"I think it does still apply, but less than it did. And it applies to New Zealand, but to a less degree than to Australia. I remember (to take a case) that we recently reviewed the sales of an important scholarly work on economics. Three-fifths of the copies we distributed went on the home market, nearly two-fifths to the Continent of Europe, and a negligible number to the Dominions."

"Take serious work on a more popular level; for instance, some of the notable works of popularisation which you have

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, MAY 20

Relieve Asthma, Bronchitis,
Colds, Coughs, Catarrh.
All Tobacconists and
Chemists, or from
**JOHNSTONE AND
BRINDEN LTD.,**
Nathan's Bond Bldg.,
47 Customs St. East,
AUCKLAND, C.I.
(P.O. Box 133).
Packets, 10 - - 1/2
Tins, 50 - - 5/2

SURAMA

MEDICATED CIGARETTES

NATURAL VITAMINS

TAK-A-VITE

A Food
Not a Medicine



Available All Chemists
and Health Food Shops
or write direct to
H. HEATH.

TAK-A-VITE PACKAGING CO.
1528 DOMINION RD., AUCKLAND, S.3

I WAS ONLY
TRYING TO FIND OUT
WHAT ZUBES ARE!



ZA2