

## PRO (and Con)

whom the story was impaired. I can hear all their arguments. What would the reviewers say of a novel about New Zealand farm life in which the bulls were milked every morning and evening? Or about a short story containing a highly circumstantial account of an international tennis match in which the rackets were referred to as "bats?" How would you like to be a yachtsman and read of a boat setting its spinnaker when it was sailing on the wind? And so on. I agree, there is room for sympathy. On the other hand, do such details really matter—or should they really matter—in a work of the imagination? No, of course not. But if the writer puts on a show of being very knowledgeable, and makes crude errors of detail, he can irritate us beyond bearing. I confess that I never read, in a sea story, about a ship doing so many "knots per hour," without wanting to see the author keel-hauled.

I suppose the common sense of the whole matter is that a writer of "naturalistic" fiction should do his best to avoid falsifying small details; that, statistically speaking, there must always be a small percentage of readers, in respect of any given novel, who are unavoidably irritated by the author's lack of omniscience; and that they are foolish to let their enjoyment of the breakfast egg be spoiled if it's served wrong way up in the egg-cup.

—A. R. D. Fairburn

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wings. We should then have been able to say: "This pig might fly!"

It may be, therefore, that Mr. Temm's aims were too moderate and that he left a much more fertile field untilled.

To blame the illustrator for the drawing would be unfair. It appears that he has, merely attempted to follow faithfully the flights of fancy indulged in by the author. His role is that of an interpreter and in this he has been successful. Mr. Temm takes full responsibility. He has not said as Doctor Johnson said to the lady who asked him why he defined a horse's fetlocks as its knees "Ignorance Madam, pure ignorance." He says his work should not be judged by reference to any fact.

To take a modern instance, Virginia Woolf had no hesitation in changing the sex of Orlando, and even the century in which he lived. That is fantasy, but it is not absurdity. Absurdity, of course, has its proper place. Refer to James Thurber *passim*. If you want the quintessence of absurdity take Thurber's favourite example from the Marx Brothers—

Groucho: "It is my belief that the missing picture is hidden in the house next door."

Chico: "There isn't any house next door."

Groucho: "Then we'll build one!"

None of these examples, however, reasonably justifies Mr. Temm's chimerical pig.

—F. J. Foot

## Opera Broadcasts for 1950

PROFESSIONAL grand opera companies which have appeared on the stage in New Zealand have not ventured far from the familiar ground represented by the *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Madame Butterfly* group of operas, and there are still scores of operatic works yet to be heard in this country. Several of the lesser known operas, or excerpts from them, have already been broadcast from time to time by the NZBS, and the rota for 1950 will contain recordings of complete operas which are expected to provide for a wide range of tastes. Some of them are not even included in the repertoires of well-known opera houses. Many were recorded in Italy, and a few in France, and they will bring to New Zealand radio listeners the voices of Continental stars whose names are new to this part of the world.

Among the works for broadcast in 1950 will be *Bastien and Bastienne*, Mozart's operetta which was first presented in the private theatre of Dr. Mesmer (presumably the hypnotist). Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, which was given with decisive success in the Royal Palace at Mantua, will be another. This opera, in a prologue and five acts, is the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Others will be Massenet's *Werther*, a lyric drama in three acts after Goethe, and Giordano's *Fedora*, based on Sardou's famous drama which was written specially for Sarah Bernhardt. *L'amico Fritz*, by Mascagni, and *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (Deliuss), will also be among the rarities. In the Delius work, listeners will hear, in a leading role, the voice of Denis Dowling, the New Zealand bari-

tone, who made a favourable impression as Junius in Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*.

Included among the other operas to be broadcast will be *Samson and Delilah* by Saint-Saens; *La Gioconda*, the only opera by Ponchielli to establish itself outside Italy; and *Pelleas and Melisande* (Debussy) in which the libretto by Maurice Maeterlinck is nearly identical with that of the play of the same title.

*The Medium*, a miniature opera by Gian-Carlo Menotti, the Italian-American composer (a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia) will be heard here for the first time in 1950. Also scheduled for next year is Verdi's *A Masked Ball* which, apart from the great merits of the music, acquired adventitious fame by the circumstances of its production (the authorities would not tolerate it in its original form of *Gustavus the Third*, and the people of Naples

to a man supported Verdi, whom they identified with the cause of Italian Independence). Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, which entranced Vienna in 1782, is to be broadcast too. Among the conductors featured in these recorded operas will be Toscanini, Molajoli, Tullio Serafini, Mascagni, Elie Cohen, Louis Fourestier and Louis Beydts.

The broadcasts will be heard at 8.5 p.m. on the first Sunday in each month from 3YA, on the second Sunday from 2YA, on the third from 4YA and on the fourth from 1YA. Before each broadcast the names of the principal soloists and the conductor will be announced over the air.



N.Z. LISTENER, NOVEMBER 4, 1949.

chaperone your cigarette

don't let it go out alone!

Fire is always someone's fault! Don't let your carelessness cause the black scars on ravaged hillsides. Please take extra care this summer with cigarettes, matches, campfires. Do your part to keep New Zealand Green!

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