

# WELLINGTON ROUNABOUT

By "Thid"

## DRIZZLE AND DRIVEL

THE wind came back to Wellington last week (and for all

I know now may be with us again as you read this). Since the Christmas rain and floods, we had lived in a sort of Turkish Bath atmosphere. Then came the wind, lifting the dust and rubbish clear of the littered streets, lifting hats, lifting skirts, tangling the smoothest head of hair and filling it with dust so that shampoos had to be as frequent as nose-blowings.

Rain followed, timed nicely for the week-end. Books had to do instead of bathing and basking or

bibliifying. There was the usual complaint about nothing to do on a wet Sunday.

I filled the day profitably, and came to the evening with a firm resolve to despatch time finally before sleepypime by chronicling the doings for Roundabout.

We shall see if the simple story makes good reading.

As a matter of fact, you would be surprised, as I am surprised, viewing it now, at the extent of the ground covered.

The telephone was out of order, and it became the mind's first exercise in ingenuity to make

the communications necessary to cancel yesterday's commitments. The telephone box was 400 wet yards away, and I had only one penny for three calls. By taking James's coat, I saved my own for more proper uses later, and put my first call through to a two-storey house. Sure enough, when the number answered, it had travelled so far from bed to telephone that it was wide awake enough to remember the messages for the other two. So one copper killed three birds, even if it was only by the impact of the inane observation that the weather was wet.

## Marmalade

And so home again, I with my boots on, but all the others still dormant. A round of cups of tea remedied that. No great personal sacrifice was this. You can achieve immense satisfaction by giving the others dry biscuits and monopolising the marmalade in the kitchen.

James arose shortly after, and came in unshaven to engage in an argument about the inaccuracy of a picture paper that said on one page that 10 out of 15 mills were closed in Wigan and, on another, that 15 mills were open and 10 closed in Wigan and outskirts. There was some cross talk about pits flooded, but the discussion lapsed when someone came in to say a gas mask brought from Europe was proving jolly useful for peeling the luncheon onions.

This naturally brought us to a controversial and censorable subject. For the honour of the emergency regulations I had to switch off a recital of Bernard Shaw's and Sean O'Casey's views on war and quote John Fothergill on the unauthorised use of hotel lavatories. We decided that Fothergill was right, although a snob. Talking of snobbery, James cited his pride in the achievement of making Chesterton laugh with the quip about spoiling lamb with mint sauce and keeping its capers for mutton.

## Sauce

After that, the stewed onions for lunch had to be served without sauce entirely, because agreement became impossible; but the three-and-a-half minute eggs, cut and flipped out on to buttered potatoes, with a garniture of what I seem to

remember as half-minute cabbage, would have turned the Daisy Chain pink with admiration.

My tea was too strong, and James protested very strongly when I remarked that it was very black. If this was not redundancy, he claimed, it was artistically inaccurate, for tea could not be black and, least of all, very black, any more than a line could be very straight or an experience very unique. I had time to cap this with a charge that he was talking in a perfect circle.

I'm quite sure I did not have too much lunch but afterwards, during the cigarette, when I came across the then Colonel Freyberg in the Innkeeper's Diary, I distinctly remember wondering, if ever I interviewed the Major-General, whether I should have the courage to ask him, in the manner of a local Swaffer, if he preferred to doodle, or play with a poodle. This seemed even more sacrilegious than staying away from morning church, so James was welcome, for a change, when he started to argue that school-teachers should be blamed for Hitler, and other modern blights. One amongst us, a school teacher, resorted to violence, even in the hallowed atmosphere created by some mention of the name of Professor Sewell; but James went to sleep in the Indian Deathlock and I went for a walk, and it all blew over.

In the last half hour the cloud had been breaking. Patches of light skimmed with the shadow across Wellington's windy hills. The sight of a bold 18-footer braving the white squalls in the harbour put us all to shame.

## Suicide

On Tinakori Hill a steep bluff of rock and my liking for views in the perpendicular halted me long enough for James to catch up and deliver an oration on various ways to commit suicide. We threw stones at a sheet of iron, scored a hit, compared the pohutukawa, unfavourably, with the rata, and descended to the pavements of the city.

James's preoccupation with the incongruous tower on top of the new M.L.C. Building, and his wonderment that the glaziers should trouble to doodle those white twirls over so many windows, did not delay us too long. Coddled eggs for tea were good on malty bread with small, tart, tomatoes.

And now Roundabout is finished, as plain and simple as Fred and Maggie, safe enough for any editor, sound and harmless enough for the censor, with all the pitfalls avoided, and nothing harmful said even if innocuity does mean so close an approach to imbecility.

James is watching the daylight go while he proclaims that women are more predatory than men. I disagree, but offer him a packet of cigarettes if he is married by February 29. Which reminds me that my third job as best man will not safely plunge me into bachelordom until March. James reassures me. "No one," he says, "would chase the author of drivels like this."

So I'm safe all ways.

IN THE VITAL SERVICES BRIMAR "DOES ITS BIT"



The blood pounding "dive" at 500 miles per hour—the body straining "level out"—swooping up to a vertical "stall" then falling away into a breath-taking "side slip." These are the daily conditions under which BRIMAR comes through with "Flying Colours." Reliability is just as essential for pleasure as for protection. Fit BRIMAR the "ten times tested" valve in your radio and be sure of long life and trouble-free service at all times.

Obtainable from all Radio Dealers

# BRIMAR

## VALVES

10 times tested — 10 times more efficient

STANDARD TELEPHONES & CABLES PTY. LTD. (Inc. in N.S.W.)  
P.O. Box 638, WELLINGTON.