

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

Letters sent to "The Listener" for publication should be as brief as possible, and should deal with topics covered in "The Listener" itself. Correspondents must send their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published. We cannot undertake to give reasons why all or any portion of a letter is rejected

## WHAT SHOULD WE EAT?

To the Editor,

"The Listener,"

Sir,—Some time back articles on fishing appeared in the columns of *The Listener*, and my attention was attracted by the writer's comment on eels. He stated that Europeans caught eels for the purpose of catching and not of eating them. To a Maori the statement is bewildering. Fond of eels as I am, I was surprised at the remark, for I don't think you can taste anything nicer than the hao or "silver belly" eel and the matamoe.

At any rate, why do we eat food? Is it to tickle the palate or to build up and strengthen our bodies? The average healthy person should be able to eat anything, provided it is wholesome. Wholesomeness, in my opinion, is the test of what is good food. The same writer who wrote on eeling as merely a pastime, stated in the same article that eels as food have been proved to be wholesome and nutritious; and therefore what is the sense in turning up one's nose at what has been proved to be a very wholesome article of diet? Europeans have yet to learn what is good for them.

I remember some years ago hearing a young pakeha describe some Maori foods as "uncivilised." If Europeans ate less "civilised" food they would not be suffering from indigestion and prematurely becoming toothless. There is, of course, no accounting for tastes. We are led more by taste than by sense.

Just out of curiosity I glanced at Aunt Daisy's recipes published in a recent issue of *The Listener*. One recipe was how to treat a joint of lamb. She advised poking holes in the joint and in the holes to put in a lot of things. Aunt Daisy contended that so treating a joint of lamb would make it taste so much nicer. At first I was puzzled, then amused. I recollected a saying of Shakespeare about "painting the lily," not that there is anything lilylike in a piece of lamb steaming in its gravy, but I could not understand how anyone could add anything to a nice joint of roast lamb in its simple and natural tastiness. My children have a recipe something like Aunt Daisy's: it is to eat pupu (periwinkle), with cream. They say pupu thus treated is delicious, but I have refused to eat "pupu and cream."

I often hear of pakeha housewives suffering from overwork and nervous breakdown. Can anyone wonder, when they unnecessarily look for and make work?

R. T. Kohere.

East Cape,

January 20, 1940.

## AUTHOR WANTED

The Editor,

"The Listener,"

Sir,—Can you or one of your readers give me the origin of the following lines, which I have sought for years?:

"... So Dion fell,

Seduced by such-like arguments, a man  
Who marred the perfect picture of a life  
By one black smutch at ending."

Yours, etc.,

Llewellyn Etherington.

Auckland,

January 22, 1940.

## NBS STRING ORCHESTRA

To The Editor,

"The Listener,"

Sir,—As far as I am aware, no outsider has yet expressed any appreciation of the new NBS String Orchestra. The reason probably is that people who

take their music seriously do not consider the best too good for them, and take it as a matter of course — as they took the Budapest String Quartet. Mr. Maurice Clare has done his selecting thoroughly, and has assembled a body of strings which is a real pleasure to listen to. Recent performances of concerti grossi and things like the Mozart "Kleine Nachtmusik" are the best flesh and blood performances I have heard on New Zealand radio, and as near perfection as we are likely to hear.

Yours, etc.,

A String Player.

Victoria College,

January 22, 1940.

## WOMEN AND WAR

To The Editor,

"The Listener,"

Sir,—As I sat reading over "Farewell to Soldiers" in last week's *Listener*, I suddenly paused and

### "ABSOLUTELY UNRIVALLED"

#### Reader's Tribute to "The Listener"

The following spontaneous tribute to "The Listener" occurs in a letter from a woman reader, whose name we may not use, but whose education and training make it very high praise indeed:

"May I say most sincerely, and without any ulterior motive at all, that I think 'The Listener' is absolutely unrivalled. Apart from the actual programmes, the articles and interviews, the news and pictures, and the excellent set-up of the whole production make it worth many times its ridiculously low price."

thought what selfishness there is in lots of women (myself included).

Over and over again I've said that I would rather bear more children (I have two small boys), than let my husband go to war, knowing perhaps that he would never come back. I do not think of the hundreds — no, thousands — of other young men who have left homes, wives, and children — never to return.

Far better to save New Zealand, always a free country, than that the selfishness of women should be put first. Yet, as I write this, I know that I could not bear to have my husband parted from me.

What sentimental fools women are!

Yours, etc.,

B.D.J.

Weheka, South Westland,

January 19, 1940.

## TROUT FOR BREAKFAST

To the Editor,

"The Listener,"

Sir,—Judging by the photo of Fred Everybody on page 49 on the January 19 issue of *The Listener*, he numbers among his many pursuits that of fisherman — though a somewhat knock-kneed one.

The various factors that contribute to the impression that Fred is wearing gum-boots might never be duplicated in a thousand photographs — not

even candid ones. The proximity of the settee and an upholstered chair, and the positions of Fred and Mr. and Mrs. Jones in relation to them, go to make a really humorous picture of what the formally dressed young man would look like, were he suddenly possessed with the idea that nothing else would do for supper but a couple of fresh trout.

If Fred did not see this picture, I suggest that you send it to him. It might possibly give him an idea for his eight hundred and fifty-eighth script.

Yours, etc.,

Ray O'Daniels.

Christchurch,

January 20, 1940.

## WHY NOT OUR OWN TREES?

To the Editor,

"The Listener,"

Sir,—I wonder does it occur to those privileged to give radio talks, or write gardening notes in our daily papers, that there is such a thing as indigenous vegetation — something that is really ours, a peculiar feature of New Zealand alone, for the most part?

The Honourable the Minister for Internal Affairs urged, I believe, the use of native trees for Centennial planting; but what a golden opportunity to follow up this sound exhortation in a logical manner by radio talks, newspaper articles, advisory lists, perhaps even coloured plates in our periodicals. Or was it a "sound" exhortation in another sense?

Perhaps it is not too late even now. We live in a botanist's paradise — sub-tropical, sub-antarctic, alpine and lowland splendour — and if the bulk of us were asked to choose a native tree for 1940 we would light on a "cabbage" tree and hope for the best. Turn to our papers, where we find copious reference to acacias, buddleas, indigoferas, "ribes"; but what a shock if some day I should find a genuine New Zealander vaunting his *Alseuosmia*, *Brachyglottis* *Carpodetus*, or *Dacrydiums*.

Yours, etc.,

A.A.P.

Kumara Junction, Westland,

January 12, 1940.

## "CELEBRITIES WANTED"

To the Editor,

"The Listener,"

Sir,—I would like to support M. D. Bassett's request for "celebrities." What soprano recording today can compare with the recordings of Amelita Galli-Curci? For technique and brilliancy of tone no present-day coloratura can hold a candle to her. Miliza Korjus is definitely third-rate, both as singer and artist, as compared with Galli-Curci. The Galli-Curci duets with De Luca and Schipa are unsurpassed, but when do we hear them?

Again, should amateurs attempt Lieder? Lotte Lehmann would not attempt Lieder until she had become a world-famous singer. Why not keep Lieder for recorded artists alone? To one who has heard Lehmann, Gerdhart, Schumann, Schlusnus, and Flagstad in person, the amateurs sound pathetic.

Certainly let us encourage our local artists, but they must learn their limitations. Why so much of Richard Crooks, and so little of John McCormack? Webster Booth is a recording artist who has recently recorded Opera in English in grand style. We have not as yet heard these records. Also we could do with more records of that glorious contralto Marian Anderson, who, Toscanini declared, had the greatest vocal organ of the century.

Yours, etc.,

Music Lover.

Sumner, Christchurch,

January 12, 1940.