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By
Countess Belewsky

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RADIOTRON VALVES

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LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(Continued from page 4)

BILLY BUNTER

Sir,—I read your article "Good-bye Billy Bunter" with a sense of personal loss as the adventures of the heroes of Greyfriars School were practically part and parcel of my boyhood days. From the age of ten to well on into the 'teens I never missed a number of either the "Magnet" or the "Gem," and can remember receiving a caning from an irate teacher for surreptitiously perusing a "Gem" concealed in my desk during lesson time. Of the two, I always preferred the "Gem" with its adventures of Tom Merry and Co. at "St. Jim's," written by Martin Clifford. The "Gem" stories were, in my opinion, on a slightly higher plane with more pretensions to literary style, while the illustrations were also superior, being at one period executed by Warwick Reynolds who illustrated for the "Strand" and other well-known magazines. I must add that I did not neglect the better type of school story written by such authors as Talbot Baines Reed, Desmond Coke, P. G. Wodehouse (yes, the same "P.G.") and others, and I can still remember the thrill of reading for the first time that great fore-runner of them all: "Tom Brown's Schooldays."

—W. L. SIMS (Onehunga).

WOMEN AND COURAGE

Sir,—We speak as we do know," so that if "Thid's" spate of rapid meanderings label his feminine friends, he has only himself to blame—though intelligent members of both sexes would criticise, not his company, but his eclecticism. As regards his wholesale condemnation of my sex, including a charge of want of courage, "Thid" has chosen a most inappropriate season for his quasi-humorous indictment—a season when women are suffering untold horrors, yet are standing shoulder to shoulder with their men, hourly performing deeds of quiet heroism in the grim arena of a man-made war. "Thid" should remember that it is men, not women, who are bombing maternity homes and children's hospitals! But that apart—has there not been even one woman, somewhere, who has contributed in some way to "Thid's" well-being—wived him, borne his children, cooked and cleaned, washed and mended, and considered him in a thousand ways? Surely not, else gratitude for that woman would be a bulwark for her sex forever against his or any other man's cheap ridicule.

As for the charge of moral cowardice—well, will "Thid" please set us an example of courage? Such a charge comes strangely from one who throws mud from the shelter of anonymity and a "Somewhere in N.Z." address. Finally, may I recommend "Thid" to discard his pen as a mud-slinger and try a long-handled shovel: it holds more, and besides, he wouldn't have to stoop so low!

—JEAN BOSWELL (Mount Eden).

"ENGLISHMAN'S WORD"

Sir,—In the current issue of *The Listener* an Australian broadcaster says: "In Buenos Aires when a man wants to assure you he is speaking the truth, he

says 'Englishman's word'." Forty-six years ago I had an experience in Colombo which confirms the reputation for probity that the English have got.

I was on my way home to England from Coolgardie about Christmas 1894 after a very successful mining career and had a few hours ashore at Colombo. I wanted to take home some of the wonderful handworked tablecloths, and was examining some in the big silk kiosk. It happens that when I am buying anything I don't like shopwalkers offering suggestions, so when a gorgeously attired Indian came up to me and said "You buy tablecloth, sahib?" I said, "No, I've got no money." This was not correct, but merely said to get rid of him, until

To The Editor

*The Editor is very wise.
He doesn't even have to guess.
He knows what stuff the public buys
And what must never go to press.
Now, should one write to him and say
The linnet sings upon the wing (doth it?)
And all my summers will be gay,
Would you but print this little thing?
Or should one leap upon a tram,
Confront him with a carefree grace;
Stridently shouting "Here I am!"
And wave one's script before his face?
Would Edgar Wallace be the game,
And should one write in blood
"Dear Ed:
Print this—or by my surest aim
To-morrow you will find you're dead?"
Alas! no treatise has been penned
Containing but the slightest hint
Of how to please the Editor,
And get the wretched stuff in print.
—Dorothy Ann Beavis*

I had made my selection, but to my surprise he said: "You no Frenchman?" "No," I replied. "You no German?" he continued. "No," I replied. "You Englishman?" "Yes," I replied. "Very good," said he. "You take what you like. I send them down to the ship and you pay me when you come back." I was so pleased to hear this opinion of an Englishman's integrity that, before I left that kiosk, the Indian silk merchant had collected more than £80 from me! May we long continue to maintain our reputation!

—"TRAVELLER" (Pio Pio).

PROGRAMMES AND ANNOUNCERS

Sir,—The main New Zealand stations broadcast an amazing amount of popular dance music, not only on Saturday nights. When classics are featured, this is done at rare intervals; 4YA and 2YA noticeably doling-out carefully measured doses of dry boredom, such as the more obscure semi-modern and pseudo-classic composers, and the more ecclesiastically

banal moments of Handel and Haydn. One could count the rare occasions when such brilliant music as that of Schubert or Wagner is featured, or such stars as Gigli and Guila Bustabo and Korjus. The average compere's conception of a classical programme compares with that of a spinsterish and cautious schoolmarm determined to educate her victims in faintly religious "culture."

Amid all this boredom and banality, the frequent orchestral and classic programmes of a single station—12M—stand out; the programmes are conspicuous with recordings by the finest world artists, and are generously given. The announcements of items are also well done, briefly and impersonally—very much a contrast to the extraordinary attempts at sonorous or luscious "elocution" favoured by certain other announcers on the air, who give the impression that what they are interested in is the sound of their own tones, not their job of work. Vowels are moaned melodiously on a mounting register, and the pauses between French or Italian syllables are rich with melodrama. One feels that announcers with such a complex as this should be trying out their talents at the juvenile recitation Competitions, instead of merely broadcasting. This striving for tonal effect, at the expense of adult dignity, is also noticeable among announcers who run the children's hours. Only in their case, gurgling patronage seems to alternate with a Sunday School or Salvationist twang of incredibly funny intensity.—"TULACH" (Timaru)

DECISIVE BATTLES

Sir,—Did the writer of "Decisive Battles" read his text too hastily, or the sub-editorial curtailment pen get out of hand, or the compositor lose a few linotype slugs, that the second and third paragraphs of the article on the Battle of Maturus should give four misreadings of Greek history? It was Athens at Salamis and Mykale as well as Sparta at Platea that shattered the power of Persia in Europe. It was Macedonia that rose to power under Philip and Alexander and, having broken Thebes and resurgent Athens, crushed the world empire of the Persians in Asia and Egypt.

But apart from this, and the implication that the Greeks as well as the Etruscans were not Aryans, I am glad to see and read these articles, and rejoice that for some at least the story of the nations will not be merely the little bit of English History they stumbled through at school.

CHAS. R. MACDONALD
(Auckland).

(We exonerate the compositor.—Ed.).

WHO WAS HOMER?

Sir,—I notice that you state, in the caption to your excellent cover illustration last week, that "there may or may not have been a poet called Homer." I think you will find that it is generally accepted to-day that the works of Homer were not written by Homer at all, but by another man of the same name.—LITT. D. (Auckland).