

# LISTENER

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## EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES:

115 Lambton Quay, Wellington, C.I.

Post Office Box 1070.

Telephone, 46-520.

Telegraphic Address: "Listener," Wellington.

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## In England Now

WE have had to condense the remarkable letter on Page 10 reprinted from our contemporary, the *ABC Weekly*: reprinted, we confess at once, without authority. But we are sure that our contemporary takes the same view as we do about the matter, viz., that such a letter belongs to everybody whose heart it will warm. By printing and circulating it throughout Australia the *ABC Weekly* has done something for the common cause that it is impossible to estimate in material terms. We feel that we are doing the same thing by making it available throughout New Zealand. Although we are not able to say that we have cut nothing important out, we have left enough in to accelerate the laziest pulse.

For Professor Hancock says this to us: Think of England every day, as you should; grieve over her, as you must; but for God's sake don't despair of her. Think straight. See things as they are. Grieve for the lost lives and shattered treasures. Brood if you can't help it over the lunacies to which the human race has descended. But don't brood over the destruction of England; it will not be destroyed. Don't go about thinking that the people live in darkness and terror: they live above the darkness and the terror. Don't lie awake weeping over the ruin of an Empire; it was never so united. Never therefore so strong. Never so right. Never therefore so confident.

Nor does he say any of these things without giving his reasons. There is not a trace in his letter of the optimism that floats on its own air. When he says that England is strong he says why it is strong — what it means for the leader and the people to work together. When he says that they no longer fear "attack in depth" he explains that it is because they have defence in depth — part-time soldiers, citizen-soldiers, producer-soldiers; everybody working or fighting, or working and fighting, without thought or knowledge of class or calling (and without very much thought of age or condition).

So he is happy, and he tells us to be happy. It is the great hour—for Britain, for liberty, for justice, and for civilisation.

## 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.

### VULGAR IS AS VULGAR DOES.

Sir,—As the controversy under the above heading threatens to degenerate into a vulgar personal dispute between Mr. Joseph C. McEvoy and myself, it can obviously be of small interest to your readers. This, therefore, is my final letter on the subject.

Mr. McEvoy, for several years past has been "trailing" me, in an inexplicable endeavour to find faults in the column about music which I contribute every week to another paper. His attacks usually contain a touch of venom, as though my harmless remarks had done him a personal injury. He fails to see that this kind of thing cannot hurt me, while it completely invalidates whatever case he might have. Abuse is no argument, and I have no intention of indulging in the tempting reprisals which his latest communication, of December 13, would amply justify. It consists mainly of a mass of pointless irrelevancies, covering such widely divergent topics as the poetry of Keats and Burns; the music of Bartok and other composers; an extract from "The Etude"; the idiosyncrasies of Mrs. Gamp and Dick Swiveller the piano-playing of Friedman; and the "ethical code" of L. D. Austin.

### Christmas And New Year Messages

We have received messages from many parts of the Dominion conveying Christmas Greetings and Good Wishes for the coming year. To the senders of all these we express sincere thanks. Most of these messages have been acknowledged, but in case any should have been overlooked we assure all those who have written to us that their good wishes are most heartily reciprocated.

Calendars are gratefully acknowledged from Messrs. Wilson & Horton, Auckland, Whitcombe & Tombs, Christchurch, and the A.M.P. Society, Wellington.

I have neither time nor inclination to follow Mr. McEvoy's aimless meanderings, sir, but there is just one remark I wish to answer—although it has nothing to do with your correspondent's allegations of "vulgarity and illiteracies" in my "prose" or "literary" style. Mr. McEvoy accuses me of having stigmatized Ignaz Friedman as a "second-rate pianist," before I "had heard the great pianist play a single note."

That criticism, Mr. Editor, was written over two years ago, on the strength of some gramophone recordings. Recently I have had the pleasure of listening to Friedman in the flesh, but still see no reason to alter my former opinion.

Admittedly, Friedman is a great artist in many respects, and some of his playing was a sheer delight. But even great pianists may be graded, and I place Friedman in the second class on two counts: (a) his inaccurate technique—pianists of the highest class seldom or never play wrong notes (b) his annoying and inexcusable habit of tampering with the text of Chopin's compositions—what Friedman evidently means by "editing."

I did not hesitate to cite these shortcomings while Friedman was still in this country, and neither Mr. McEvoy nor anyone else has been able to disprove my criticism. If this is what your correspondent, sir, calls "sustaining myself in my self-chosen role of Sir Oracle," he entirely misconstrues the function of the music critic. But, of course, this is only on a par with Mr. McEvoy's characteristic misunderstanding. —L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).

### THE NUMBER AND THE BEAST.

Sir,—"Thid's" mention in the recent article of a curious interpretation of Chapter 13, Book of Revelation, recalls to my mind an interpretation of the same Bible passage made some years ago during the Great War of 1914-18. The formula in this case is to number each letter of the alphabet as indicated in "Thid's" article except that the starting number for A is one. Germany's leader in those days was the

More letters from listeners will be found on page 15.

Kaiser. After the number representing each letter in the word Kaiser add the number six, and add each of the numbers as follows:

K	116
A	16
I	96
S	196
E	56
R	186

KAISER = 666

The results shown above and in "Thid's" formula are surely strange.—"WHO'S NEXT?" (Napier).

### PROSE OR POETRY?

Sir,—Your reviewer J.G.M. in his recent review of Anton Vogt's "Anti All That" writes: "Much of it is good, strong, individualistic stuff: 'Fame,' for instance," and he quotes: "This man was so famous that every time he opened his mouth every newspaper in the province quoted him; but it is also indisputably true that even in his own city there were countless thousands who never read the newspapers at all except to get the sporting news."

"Strong, individualistic poetry?" I say bah! Because Anton Vogt chooses to print very ordinary prose in lines as poems are written and printed, J.G.M. seems to think it is poetry, and good at that. What element at all of poetry is there in the words quoted, whatever view of poetic diction you hold, whatever theory or definition of poetry you advance?

J.G.M. says some of Anton Vogt's "verse" may be considered "modern" and "difficult," but unfortunately quotes none of this sort. The words I have quoted are not even "complex"—which might according to J.G.M. "frighten readers of poetry in this country." I think they will be much more likely to be frightened at the thought that poetic criticism—or rather criticism of verse—in this country is in the hands of a critic who thinks such lines as those quoted are "good, strong, individualistic" poetry. If you print this whole letter in lines as verse—I wish you would—it will be just as good, strong and individualistic, but will still be prose.

—LLEWELLYN ETHERINGTON (Auckland).

### BING CROSBY AND BEAU VITE

Sir,—Your article on Bing Crosby and Beau Vite states that it is the first time that Bing has considered buying a horse in Australia and New Zealand. It may be of interest to your readers to know that Bing offered (I think) the same sum for The Trump after he won the two big cups in Melbourne.

—E. C. MURPHY (Christchurch).

### "GRAMOFAN" SESSION

Sir,—We were disappointed to find that the "Gramofan" session was not included in your programme to-night, and trust this does not mean that it is to be discontinued. Besides having exceedingly interesting things to say, the cultured voice of "Gram" is very pleasant and easy to listen to.

—CHARLES HAVILAND (Wellington).

("Gram" will be back.—Ed.).

### ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

"Disgusted Reader."—A serious charge which, if you signed it and we printed it, might cost you (and us) some money.