

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday Price Threepence

MAY 23, 1941

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For Subscription and Advertising Rates see Page 40.

A Century

WITH this issue we reach our first century—if not quite our centennial. We have appeared every week since June 30, 1939, and if the journey has been a very short one measured in time, it has been considerable counted in words. We have not counted them, and are not going to, but if we say that we are near the end of our fourth volume, and that each volume is three inches thick, it will be realised that we have produced already nearly a cubic foot of words and filled more than five thousand pages. Or, to put it another way, we have printed and produced a little more than five novels each as long as *Gone With the Wind*.

We do not, of course, suppose that these million and a-quarter words would make a very big book of wisdom. We remember the question in Job, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" and are as humble as we can afford to be. But we also remember that Governments which ration words invariably ration liberty. Foolish as so many of our words have been, they have not been so foolish, so dangerous, or so injurious as the "Thou shalt not" of tyrants. We may even claim that words do not darken counsel in the long run when they go free, since one folly cancels out another, and the small remnant of wisdom and truth remains. Words are windows as well as curtains, and the more windows there are in the world, the less darkness there will be, social, political and scientific.

But our real reason for pausing for a moment at this point is to seize an opportunity to say to our hundred thousand readers that it is their century as well as ours. If we have done anything worth while at all, it is because they have supported us; and we do not mean supported us blindly. They have thrown many heavy bricks at us, some of which have hit us on tender but fortunately not dangerous places. But they have also sent us dozens and dozens of bouquets, all of which we have appreciated, if we have not often had the time and the grace to acknowledge them. We hope they will go on doing both these things. And if they ask us questions sometimes which we do not answer, make suggestions which we do not adopt, and send offers of help which we may appear to ignore, we hope they will believe that no letter written to us is ignored.

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 in 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.

PRONUNCIATION AND CROONING

Sir,—Regarding the pronunciation of certain words on the air which is objected to by listeners, I wish to put before you a different angle to the subject. I have even heard in the Educational session pronunciation which gives a different meaning from what is intended. Here are a few examples: "Raleigh spread his cloak to receive the queen descending from her 'couch'!" "So and so, a person of outstanding ability, was appointed as 'Cha-man' to the meeting." Was it a cleaning-up job? Again, from 4YA comes the "wobbling" of birds. The weather man used to speak of an "approaching guile." The inability to use the letter "r" at the end of a word, as when "water" becomes "watah," is found also with negroes. I don't know how we got it here. "Here" becomes "Hae-aw," suggesting a Chinese gentleman. These same so-called teachers enjoy mimicking the dialects of Britain. Well, I prefer native dialects to this hash which, if persisted in, is not fair to the scholar, unless spelling is altered to suit.

Again, nearly every morning there comes over the air the moans of a cowboy in distress with the stomach ache. This, I understand, is called crooning. A sick cow nearby adds her voice to this depression. Next item, the hungry, noisy calves burst into the separating room, and the ensuing clatter of cans, etc, with dogs and cowboy joining in is—jazz! One writer to your paper upholding this devil's own din as music stated that it was highly technical and most difficult to execute. Maybe, but it's a sight more difficult to put up with. Still, as music for a primeval war dance of junglefolk, inciting them to smash things, or even at times for a kind of dance for social purposes in the tribe, it would be highly successful. Do you think room could be found for, say, Bracken's poems, or even for old songs of the Australian bush—of bushranging or gold-digging? One I have in mind I would like to hear, a favourite of Otago men in the last war—"Take Me Back to Bendigo." What about it? Something for those of us with memories of old New Zealand.

—WALTER A. KENT. (Catlins).

FAMILY HISTORIES

Sir,—I notice that a correspondent "1066," Wanganui (*Listener*, April 24), claims that he (or she) could trace the ancestry of Hugh Rose of Kilravock back to Adam. I was under the impression that most people regarded the story of Adam and Eve as a bed-time tale of the ancients. However, be that as it may, I must say I regard the claim with extreme scepticism, especially when "1066" quotes as his (or her) authority the Bible which, as regards history and chronology, displays no evidence of being reliable. For instance, in the year 4004 B.C. (according to Bible chronology), the creation of Adam, the first man, occurred (Gen. 2). Again (in Gen. 8 and 9), we are informed that (in the year 2345 B.C. according to Bible chronology), the only human beings on this earth were those who survived the universal deluge, namely Noah and his relatives. Such claims are, of course, in the light of archaeological discovery of recent years, absurd both historically and chronologically, and once those errors are admitted what reliance can be placed on Biblical genealogy?

In support of my contention that the events cited above are inaccurate, I should like "1066" to consider the following facts which have been disclosed by archaeology: Approximately 4000 years B.C., about the time when Adam was supposedly created, the Ancient Egyptians already had a calendar dividing

the year into 365 days and 12 months, and had as well a system of decimal weights and measures, besides fairly well developed medical and chemical sciences. Also the arts of building, sculpture, pottery, literature, music and painting were highly developed. Indeed, W. M. Flinders Petrie, Professor of Egyptology, dates traces of civilisation in Egypt as early as 10,000 years B.C., while Sir Leonard Woolley tells us that the whole history of Egypt has been recovered by archaeological work in astonishing detail. "I suppose," he says, "we know more about ordinary life in Egypt in the 14th century B.C. than we do about that of England in the 14th century A.D." Further, in the year 2347 B.C. (according to Biblical chronology), when Noah and his relatives stepped from the ark, the city of Thebes, later Egypt's capital, was then a great and splendid city with a remote past.

The significance of these facts, to my way of thinking, discredits any Biblical genealogy, and I think the Adam and Eve incident may safely be relegated to the realm of myth and legend.

In closing, allow me to express the opinion that "1066" and others who indulge their fancy in tracing ancient ancestors should be cautious in naming their authorities.—L. COONEY (Auckland).

WHO CLAIMS THIS?

Sir,—Could you kindly inform me about my favourite author through the medium of your valuable journal? I should like to know when he was born, where, and what he has been doing in England during this war. Also his latest book. Thanking you in anticipation.—"INTERESTED READER"

IRISH MELODIES

Sir,—Having followed with interest the recitals of the Irish tenor Dan Foley, I, like many others, was disappointed at not hearing him included in the 2YA Variety Programme on Saturday night, April 19, as it was stated he would appear. I think many people will agree with me that the Irish melodies are pleasing to hear and through the medium of your paper, I wish to express my appreciation of his appearances before the microphone, and hope to hear more of him in future programmes.—C. E. FAGAN (Karanga-hape).

[We are advised that Dan Foley has now concluded his tour of the main National stations but he is remaining in New Zealand and performs from time to time from other stations. He did not appear on the programme of "Saturday Night Variety" as listed because he had received many requests for popular Irish numbers and as these did not fit into that Variety Hour he was given studio recitals specially for his request items.—Ed.]

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

MISS M. POWELL (Paeroa):—Sorry, but we haven't a photograph of James Raglan (Roger Milroy) nor any biographical details, but we're still looking.

NAOMI A. STIRLING (Wanaka):—"Tchaikovsky" by E. Markam Lee (Lane), or better still "Tchaikovsky" by Edwin Evans (Dent) in the "Master Musicians" series.

"INQUIRER" (Sumner): Something more has come to hand about Angela Parselles, Australian soprano. She went on the stage against her parents' wishes, and ended up at Covent Garden. Her first BBC job, about four years ago, was an eleventh-hour "stand-in" with Anona Winn, in "Songs from the Films." She has also broadcast from Radio Normandie, Poste Parisienne, and other Continental networks. She has made gramophone records with Debroy Somers Band at Columbia Studios. She sang Hedda in *Pagliacci* at Covent Garden, and was selected from fifty applicants to play the same role in the film version, but had a nervous breakdown just before. She returned to Australia about two years ago, married Hans Trouser, had a baby son and lives in Melbourne. She broadcasts occasionally from 3LO.

"OTAYE."—Thank you for your appreciative remarks about Russell Clark's drawings. Although we can't persuade him to talk for publication you will get an impression of him, as he appears to himself, in our issue of November 17, 1939, and another as he appears to our photographer on the cover of our issue of November 26, 1939. He's in this issue, too, on page 12. Your inquiry about a collection of his drawings we shall leave him to answer by letter.

STANLEY DEVERELL (Kati Kati):—Your criticism has been noted. We published one photograph of John Charles Thomas on March 7, but have not yet been able to find anything better.

"DUNEDIN LISTENER":—You forgot to give your name and address.

"OSTRICH OR REALIST"?—A guinea for your thoughts if you will supply name and address.