

NEW ZEALAND
LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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"Forever Freedom"

ONCE before on this page we have named a Penguin book that could with advantage be issued to every soldier. Now, a year later, we name another: *Forever Freedom*, by Josiah Wedgwood and Allan Nevins. Freedom, we know, is a two-edged sword that neither children nor fools may safely play with; but the compilers of this collection do not play with it. They handle it with a masterly and lofty skill. They are idealists, with a firm faith in the perfectibility of human nature; see mankind on the march "from the animal to the divine"; and insist that freedom to choose is essential to progress.

In whatever words we express it most of us share that faith, and we have slipped a long way from grace if this book does not strengthen our faith. It is stimulating, to begin with, to realise how deeply liberty is ingrained in English and American minds, for of all the passages quoted in these two hundred and fifteen pages the only extracts not originally written in English are from the Bible. From the *Great Charter* ("We will sell to no one, we will deny or defer to no one, right and justice") to the most recent speeches of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt we have a continuous variation on that great theme. And by variation we mean variation. There are members in this shining company whose love of liberty pushes them near to anarchy: Henry David Thoreau, for example, whose essay on *Civil Disobedience* carries individualism straight into jail. Others, though less unbending, strike a higher note than most of us can reach or follow: Milton, for example, with his insistence on the "right to think, to know, and to utter," and Wendell Phillips when he says that "the community which does not protect its humblest and most hated member in the free utterance of his opinion, no matter how false or hateful, is only a gang of slaves." It would be foolish to deny that these at present are what the Bible calls hard sayings. They are true, but they give truth a disturbing, and to some of us an alarming appearance.

That, however, is the case with most of the convictions by which the best men are ruled. They lead into difficult country, and it depends on our strength as well as on our courage whether we go, or should go, all the way. We must go as far as we can, and in the case of liberty we have little reason as a nation to be ashamed of the position we now occupy. It is not easy and sometimes in fact not possible, to keep our deeds in line with our words, but the better our words are in general the better our actions will be, and the purpose of this anthology is to get the prophets of liberty, and their words, into the very fibre of our being.

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.

CROSSWORD PUZZLES

Sir,—The new *Listener* for next week has just arrived and a hurried glance through fails to show a crossword puzzle. Could these be continued weekly as before? I know space is limited, but surely a crossword could take the place of one of the photographs which are (judging by my family) hardly glanced at, or failing that, couldn't they go instead of one of the fantastic little drawings which now appear on five pages drawing attention to various items? These may be well done and clever—I am not deriding them—but they are looked at perhaps once during the week for a few seconds while a good crossword puzzle (and we have had some excellent ones in the past) provides hours of interesting and intellectual amusement. I am not a natural grumbler, and know you have a hard row to hoe to please everyone, but suggesting what you could leave out instead of the crossword puzzle might help you.—"HERE'S HOPING" (Whangarei).

Sir,—I wish to express my great disappointment at the omission of the usual crossword puzzle in your two last issues. I agree with a previous writer who stated that he derived considerable enjoyment in solving the problems and hoped they would be continued. May I claim your sympathy in this respect, and thank you in anticipation of the prospect of further puzzles in the future?

—W. F. WARREN (Devonport).

Sir,—Let me congratulate the "Two Bohemians." The session is not long enough. But you have broken your word about the crossword puzzle. You told us that you would be continuing them every week. What about this week?—E.R., (Waitara).

(To these and other correspondents we again express our regret, and our hope—not a promise this time—that we shall in future find space for the Crossword Puzzle.—Ed.).

SWINGING THE OLD MASTERS.

Sir,—I think I may safely claim to be an average listener of the radio. I admit to a preference for light classical music but I also enjoy jazz and swing music. Yet, I appeal to you, is it necessary to swing the works of old masters? Only to-night I heard Listzt's "Liebestraum" distorted almost out of all recognition. The beauty of that particular melody to most of us is the soothing, restful effect it creates. Jazz has doubtless many excellent features but no one could accuse it of having a soothing effect. If our jazz composers think they can improve on the old masters, very well; but I do not think I am over-reaching myself when I say that the general public is quite satisfied with the original. Jazz is jazz and classical music is classical, totally different, and the two should not be confused.—PAX (Otautau, Southland).

QUITE ENOUGH SERIALS

Sir,—What's creeping on Mary Gee? (*Listener*, May 2.) She says there are not enough serials. Heaven preserve us from her ilk! We do NOT get music practically all day, not even from the four main National stations. There is music, of course, but just glance through the day's programme of a YA station, Mary Gee, and note the News Broadcasts, talks on this and that, serials, services, etc.

Why should we have one serial every evening in the early part of the programme? Those of us who get out and work have a personal serial of our own

going on all day. We appreciate music when we relax in the evenings. Mary Gee says, "during the day we use our radio only at meal times, and the programmes then are all music." Well, well, whose fault is that? Must the programme organisers perspire over the needs of those who listen only while they eat? Try using your radio between meals, Mary Gee.

Very willingly I concede that no really sane person enjoys the nauseous outpourings of Cotton, Crosby & Co., but must serials be substituted for them?

There must be many thousands who, like myself, simply haven't the time to settle down and listen to radio serials as an entertainment in themselves, but who do appreciate music—neither too highbrow nor too lowbrow—as a delightful, useful, and beneficial background to our reading and writing.

Finally, what about trying the Commercial stations, Mary Gee? They are loaded to the gunwales with serials, some of them excellent ones.—FRANK GEE (Wellington).

"TUSITALA" AND HIS TALES

Sir,—A matter which puzzles us is why our "Tusitala," when he "tells his tales," does not appear to make a practice of giving out the names of the authors whose stories he reads. One would not dream of accusing "Tusitala" of discourtesy, and yet it does seem as if the least he could do would be to mention the source of his stories, if only as a gesture of courtesy to the authors, so there must be some very good reason or reasons for the omission, and it would interest us to know them.—"PHULHAT" (Te Puke).

"Tusitala" himself replies as follows:—"Your correspondent asks why 'Tusitala,' when he tells his tales, does not make it a practice to give out the names of the authors. He can only reply that whenever the author's name has any significance in the story itself, acknowledgment is made; but when the name adds nothing to the value of the story, it is omitted; e.g., many of O. Henry's tales are so date-stamped as to be almost unintelligible without mention of name, place and date. Similarly, 'Saki' wrote so many of his delightful fantasies with contemporary and topical interest that they need similar comment. On the other hand, literally scores of tales used are by writers very very old or very very new, whose names would mean little or nothing to the great majority of listeners. There is the final problem of word-economy in compressing the usual quart into a pint pot; stories of variable length into an invariable thirteen minutes or less. If there is any added listener-interest to be achieved by naming the author and circumstance, 'Tusitala' will be happy to do so."

NEW ZEALAND LITERATURE

Sir,—Mr. Mulgan's reply to G. R. Gilbert escaped my reading, but the latter's expression of concurrence with "what Mr. Mulgan has said more clearly" (*Listener*, April 24), still lacks that clarity so modestly and so rightly disclaimed by its writer.

"What I tried to say, and what Mr. Mulgan has said more clearly is that in writing about people or places all that the writer has to orient himself is his race." After stating this, G. R. Gilbert then proceeds, I assume, to demonstrate what this mysterious quality (or is it quantity?) does for a writer, triumphantly continuing his unintelligible verbal capering with "the important things were that Tolstoy was a Russian, and he wrote of the whole world of people in a Russian manner, feeling deeply in the way a Russian would experience such things." Clumsily paraphrased as: "the important things were that Tolstoy was Tolstoy, and he wrote of the whole world of people as only Tolstoy could, feeling deeply in the way he experienced such things," the statement becomes intelligible.

Until G. R. Gilbert can clearly understand and define what he means by the term *race* it were better, for the sake of clarity, if he expunged the word from his vocabulary; for all he demonstrates is the emotional use of a meaningless word. In other words, he feels more about race than he thinks.

His remaining remarks on the writing of New Zealanders suffers necessarily from the same defect of loose thinking, mean nothing and require no other comment.—J. K. ALEXANDER (French Pass).

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

BILL CARTER (Newtown): Not at present.