

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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## "Silly" Art

IT would be interesting to know how many of our readers would have recognised the face on our cover page if it had not been labelled. If on the other hand we had shown Mickey Mouse, recognition would have been instant and universal. It is a case where everybody knows the creation, hardly anybody the creator. And yet so great an authority as David Low not only says, but is prepared to maintain, that Disney is the "most significant figure in graphic art since Leonardo." Has Low just gone mad?

If we knew the answer we would know what Disney himself thinks he is doing; and it is doubtful if even Low knows that. For it is no longer a case of explaining Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck or of saying where Snow-White stands in the Disney scheme of things. Disney has recently moved right out of the comics, Low claims, to the higher plane of the art of the future, and if Leonardo were alive to-day "he would be in his back room inventing simplifications of animating processes and projection devices." In other words Low suggests that art is about to move past static representations of nature, and perhaps of moods, and will not rest until it has added the beauty of movement. Stick-in-the-muds will scoff, but Disney has reminded us that women move and trees bend and that it is not enough to concentrate on form and colour and light.

But if Disney has ascended into the light, what happens to the comic extravagances of his unregenerate days? Will grown-ups dare any longer to recognise Donald Duck, or will it be bad form in future to stoop lower than a Bach fugue or a Beethoven-Disney pastoral? We can't have it both ways. We have either been too ridiculous in the past to be excused or we are going to be too solemn in the future to remember that Disney began by being "silly."

## 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 Correspondents must send in their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published.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.

### MORE ABOUT BREAD.

Sir,—For their part in the crusade against ignorance and prejudice, Dr. Muriel Bell and Dr. Turbott deserve our grateful thanks. I sometimes wonder, however, whether enthusiasm causes laboratory hypotheses to be too readily taken for granted—whether things are always as simple in fact as on paper, or should I say, whether laboratory conditions are always duplicated in the human body. Dr. Bell, in championing the cause of genuine wholemeal bread against commercial white bread, is acting wisely. There can be no argument about that. But I am inclined to think the only real advantage of wholemeal bread (and of course a vitally important one) lies in its Vitamin B content. It seems to me that, when the daily amount of bread consumed by the individual is considered, the unabsorbed residue must be of an insufficient quantity to have any appreciable effect as an intestinal stimulant. Does not the softer and much bulkier cellulose residue of fruit and vegetables render the bran of wholemeal bread of small significance?

Take again the iron content of wholemeal bread. Its presence is clearly of no use unless it exists in an assimilable form, and if my interpretation of recent researches is correct, the iron is imprisoned in parts of the grain which remain unaffected by gastric juices and therefore is not absorbed into the system. If the mere taking into the stomach of mineral or other elements guaranteed their passage into the system we could overcome primary anaemia by swallowing a small daily quota of iron filings.

I would be glad to hear Dr. Bell's comments on the foregoing suggestions. My purpose is not, I hasten to add, indulgence in smug debunking tactics, but an honest desire for enlightenment on the points raised.

### "HOORAY FOR SPINACH" (Dunedin).

Dr. Bell makes this reply: "I wish to thank Hooray for Spinach for his letter and particularly for the spirit in which it was written. This reply is intended in the same spirit of scientific answer to scientific inquiry. The author has the same misgivings as I have with regard to the too ready application of results of animal experimentation to the case of human beings. And yet if we become slaves to caution, we are just as likely to fall into error. Witness the example of vitamin K, until recently thought to be of value only in fowls, but latterly found to have great importance in human treatment. There are some processes common both to the human organism and to the lowly yeast organism. I might easily have yielded to the temptation not to make public statements when my own temperament inclines to scientific misgivings. I might also join those who decry spinach because its available iron content is not what it was formerly cracked up to be, or because

its oxalic acid content renders its calcium unavailable. I might also take up the point of view that the phytic acid content of wholemeal bread and its "toxamine" properties are disadvantageous. But in writing short articles for public consumption, or even in giving lectures to University students, one has to express dogmatic opinions which do not convey one's scientific doubts. Otherwise the confusion would be just too appalling.

I might be prepared to agree about the superiority of vegetables if I were not attempting to make a food formula for the people as a whole, and indeed it is the poorer section who should be my care, rather than the better-off section of the people. One realises that there are those who are unable to afford vegetables in the abundance which is good for them, and to those whose purse limits their choice, and who are actually in greater need of advice as to the choice they should make, bread happens to be the staff of life. In a well-ordered dietary, the cost of fruits and vegetables is something like 22% of the total food costs—probably over twice what the average New Zealander spends on them. Practically everyone eats meat, potatoes and bread; the additions vary. In that case wholemeal bread is better. The costs of the "protective" foods are always such as to make them susceptible to the axe of economy. For verification of this statement, see "Food, Health and Income" by Orr, and "Diet and Nutrition for the Australian People," etc. It is this section of the people who worry anyone who is audacious enough to give dietary advice to the community as a whole.

There is no mechanical reason why the iron of wholemeal bread should not be suitable for absorption; if it is absorbed readily from the intestines of rats (where it has only 4 or 6 hours to do it in) it should be absorbed more easily from the intestine of human beings where it has been 12 and 24 hours to linger. The balance of scientific evidence appears to point to the iron of cereals as being readily utilisable for blood formation, and indeed in some studies of human cases, the germ of wheat even promoted the absorption of iron from other foodstuffs.

The housewife does not always keep the water in which spinach is cooked; this renders its iron liable to losses of from 25 to 50%. The bran of whole wheat is one of the best forms of roughage, and thus is one of the best laxatives, for those who can tolerate it. Vegetables vary in their effectiveness as stimulants to the intestine.

### CLASSICAL MUSIC.

Sir,—It is pleasing to observe that the manner of setting out programmes in *The Listener* has already improved in so far as the classical programmes of minor stations are now fully set out while the details of "Dinner Music" sessions have vanished. Much more can be done, however. In particular listeners will appreciate the detailing of items which make up the Sunday afternoon sessions. "For the Music Lover," and the week-night sessions "The Masters in Lighter Mood."

Another point of policy in which the NBS surely errs is in often presenting the best programmes from the minor stations (whose good reception cannot be general outside the comparatively small areas which they are intended to serve) while the four main stations have only junk to offer. For instance, compare 3YL's programme every Saturday night with those of the main Nationals.

In closing might I remind whoever selects our programmes that there were two composers named Mozart and Beethoven who both wrote symphonic music. We should like to hear some of it occasionally. "FIGARO" (Wellington).

### ENGLISH ON THE AIR.

Sir,—Mrs. Davidson's criticism of ZB station English in your current issue is very ill-founded. H. W. Fowler, the acknowledged authority on the English language, states: "The right plural of such nouns as handful, cupful, spoonful, etc., is handfuls, etc., not handfuls." Mrs. Davidson again errs regarding "different to." The same authority states: "That different can only be followed by *from* and not by *to* is a superstition." This statement he justifies with reasoned grammatical explanation. Mr Fowler also states that with the verb "be" was just as correct as subjunctive form as *were* when following the word "if" in such a sentence as Mrs. Davidson quotes. It would appear that ZB station English is not as deplorable as Mrs. Davidson would have us believe.

B. COTTRILL (Auckland).

## NOTICE TO ALL READERS

Starting soon. Our own Serial. Written in New Zealand for New Zealanders. And it is a thriller!

Women, this is for you. Don't miss the opening instalment.

And don't suppose, men, that it is for women only. It will interest you as much as, if he could read, it would interest your dog. It begins with a dog. With a dog and some hikers.

Watch next issue.