

# MORE HEADACHES IN G

**THIS** is the second part of an article for "The Listener" by PROFESSOR ARNOLD WALL, in which he lists examples of the muddle caused in the pronunciation of the English language by the letter "g." The first part of the article appeared in our issue of January 2.

## Vulgarisms

"Analogous." I, and others who have consulted me, have heard this as "analogous" for "analogous." This is unpardonable, for while, as I have said already, the "rule" for g before e, i, and y, is notoriously ignored, the rule concerning hard g before a, o, and u is quite strictly observed. I believe that the only exceptions are "mortgagor," in which we have unfortunately used the Latin form "or" instead of the English "-er," and the freak "gaol" for which we have the virtuous alternative "jail." So the j in "analogous" is really dreadful; apparently those who say this are misled by "analogy," which is commonly used in speech while "analogous" is comparatively rare.

"Belligerent." Rather to my astonishment I have heard this fairly often recently as "belligherent" instead of "belligerent." I regard this as a true vulgarism, entirely unauthorised.

"Guava." I hear this occasionally as "gava" instead of "gwava." I can only suppose that those who say this are misled by the example of such words as "guard."

"Gesture." Though there is no room for any difference of opinion regarding this very common word I hear it quite often as "ghesture," instead of "jesture."

The error seems to be due to pure ignorance.

"Gist." In this case, too, I am astounded to hear "ghist" for "jist" and imagine that those who say it are thinking of "give" or "gimlet." "Jist" is the only possible pronunciation.

"Gewgaw." I have been spared the hearing of this as "jewgaw," but, having been consulted by those who have found themselves in doubt, I suppose it must sometimes be heard. The only possible sound for the first g, as for the second, is "gh."

"Longitude." This is correctly "lonjitude," but the hard g seems to come so naturally and is so frequently to be heard, that I could not stigmatise it as a vulgarism.

"Dinghy," or "dingey" (both spellings are permitted). This should be "dinggy," with the "ng" as in "finger," but it is often pronounced with the "ng" as in "singer," and also, I shudder in the saying, as "dinjy."

"Orgy." This is "orjy," not "orghy," as so often to be heard.

## Doubts and Difficulties

"Margarine." Of course this "ought to be "margharine," and if the inventor of this trade name had had the good sense to spell it "margarine," there would be no doubt about it; as it is, people who use the word, thinking of "Margery," instead of "Margaret," often pronounce it with the j. I suppose that this will ultimately prevail, as it is recommended by the BBC. regularly used in "the trade," and certainly more popular than the form which is more in accordance with the spelling. If and

when this comes to pass "marjarine" will stand with "mortgagor" and "gaol" as an aberrant.

"Gibber" and "gibberish." There is here a conflict of opinion. Both "gh" and j are allowed by some authorities in both words, but undoubtedly, among the best speakers, the verb is "jibber" and the noun "ghibberish."

"Gibbous." This uncommon word for "convex" or "protuberant" is correctly pronounced "ghibbous," but few of us ever pronounce it at all.

"Gingko." This is "ghingko," but is often to be heard as "jingko."

"Gynaecology." Until very recent times this was "jyn-" but it has now been decreed in scientific circles that the sound should be "ghyn-" though the older pronunciation cannot yet be called wrong.

"Gypsophila." In this word, as in the parent word "gypsum," the sound should be "jyps-". Yet the Oxford Dictionary prescribes "ghyps-" so both must apparently be permitted.

"Autogyro." Both "gh" and j are recommended by different authorities, but j is the sound in the Air Force and will probably prevail. The same latitude is allowed in the allied words such as "gyrostat," "gyroscope," etc.

"Suggest." This has long been a bone of contention, the alternatives being "sujgest" and "sugjest." At present the weight of authority favours "sujgest," not "sugjest," but the latter cannot be called wrong. This fellow has been vacillating for about two hundred years and has not made up his mind yet.

"Malingering." The only permissible pronunciation is "malinggher," stressed on "ling."

"Harbinger." The only permissible pronunciation is "harbinjer," stressed on "harb-".

"Pedagogy." The first g in this horrible word is of course hard "gh," but the second, according to authorities, may be either j or "gh," while the o may be either short or long.

"Genre." This is always pronounced as French, the g having the sound "zh." Owing to its distinctively French form it seems impossible to Anglicise it.

## A Packet of Names

Both Christian names and surnames often give us pause in respect of the softness or hardness of g. In many cases different people who bear the same name pronounce it differently, tending to regard it as a sort of personal property which they can treat as they please, and generally following the family tradition in surnames.

In all the following names the g is hard, "gh";

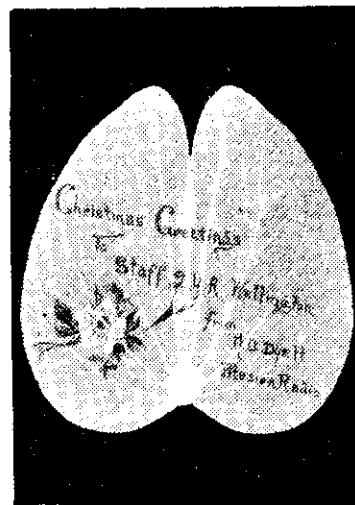
"Gilbert," "Gerontius," "Gill" as a surname, but as the short form of "Gillian,"—"Gill"—usually spelt "Jill" and pronounced accordingly, "Gillow," "Gillies," "Hargest," "Elgin."

In the following the g is soft, j: "Gillson," "Gillett," "Gillian" (a form of "Juliana"), "Burgin," "Geesen," "Gingell," ("Jinjell").

The name "Gifford" is peculiar in that as a place-name it is "Ghifford," while as a surname it is both "Ghifford" and "Jifford." The surname "Gill" is both "Ghill" and "Jill."

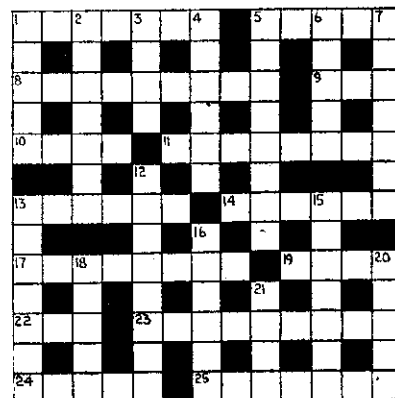
These lists are of course not exhaustive, but represent a fair selection of typical fish from the kettle. GEE!

## NOVEL XMAS CARD



*THIS* novel Christmas greeting, designed in water-colours on the skeleton of a leaf from a Pitcairnia native shrub, was recently received in Wellington. It was sent as a gesture of goodwill to the staff of 2YA by N. D. Dyett, a young Wellington radio enthusiast, who is now living on Pitcairnia Island. He is a son of Mr. and Mrs. H. L. P. Dyett, of Karori.

## THE LISTENER CROSSWORD (No. 85)



### Clues Across

5. Fossilised resin.
1. I am sane, in spite of loss of memory.
8. Meat in tents results in a will.
9. Gun.
10. Uncommon.
11. O! march in (anag.).
13. My code when confused is a matter for laughter.
14. Outer coating of teeth.
17. Oiled, son? (anag.).
19. In short, this former ruler is composed of a saint and an artist.
22. Likely to contain tea, coffee, or ashes.
23. Since, ants are so industrious, they are naturally this in their efforts.
24. Snare (anag.).
25. Go down.

### Clues Down

1. Stare (anag.).
2. Quack remedy.
3. Bogus.
4. Kind of vinegar made from ale.
5. Not in May (anag.).
6. Double sirlon.
7. Aid Carl (anag.).
12. Don's idea of a childish affliction.
13. Tom's cue is a garment.
15. It makes an error.
16. Flinched.
18. Of the moon.
20. Scolded.
21. Name given to the upper reaches of the Thames.

**Make his heritage  
SECURE**

Whatever plans you may have for your son, make wise provision to see that they are carried out, in case your own experience and judgment are not available when the time comes for him to assume the full responsibilities of life.

A great safeguard of his interests will be for you to appoint the Public Trustee the executor and trustee of your estate.

Ask the Public Trust Office for details of the permanent, faithful and efficient service which it can render.

**The PUBLIC  
TRUSTEE**