

With Ben Tillet In Wellington

(Written for "The Listener" by T. L. MILLS)

BEN TILLET had lived so long that in New Zealand, at any rate, he had been practically forgotten.

Yet his was a name to conjure with for well over half a century in Great Britain generally and in London particularly, where he was the idol of the dockers. I first came into personal contact with him during his tour of New Zealand in 1907 when he was 36 years of age. He was out here collecting fighting funds for the waterside workers of London who had been impoverished by the dockers' strike. I was tagged as a Labour agitator myself in those days, and it was in this capacity that I came into close association with this great



BEN TILLET

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London County Councillor and his desire for reform, one would have thought that the Local Government Board would have suited him admirably. Yet he was not a great success as a Minister. He was the author of a Town Planning Act, but not of much else. The Conservative Opposition, as well as Liberals and Labour men, complained that he was too conservative. One Liberal who worked with him and found him difficult, described Burns as "a glorious, robust, truculent, triumphant, wayward, and lovable personality." This critic also said that Burns worked at things he did not understand. Probably A. G. Gardiner was right when he wrote that John Burns's true vocation was not that of a Minister, but of a challenger, and that public life lost far more than it gained when it harnessed him to office.

John Burns resigned from the Government when war came in 1914, because he did not approve of the policy that led up to it. He never made any public statement on the subject. In the elections at the end of 1918, he realised that he could not hold Battersea without official Labour support, but he refused to join the party, so he did not stand. After that, he lived in retirement, and sank into obscurity. He will not be remembered as a Cabinet Minister, but as a great force outside Parliament, a tribune of the people in times when there was less freedom and more privilege.

little man—he was five-feet nothing from the feet up. During the week of his visit to Wellington another famous figure was filling a season at the old Opera House in Manners Street—Cinquavalli, the conjuror. Ben and "Cinq." knew each other well, owing to the fact that Ben was a prominent member of the London County Council, and was on the special committee established by that council to visit the music halls of the city and report any that allowed their performers to break the rules of decency.

I saw a demonstration of Ben Tillet's familiarity with the music hall at Mr. Seddon's home in Molesworth Street. Ben was invited to entertain the company, and gave an impersonation turn. He was a whole company in himself. I have never seen or heard a better mimic.

But Ben and I had a date with Cinquavalli after the latter's show, so that after the Seddon party we went to the Opera House, back-stage. "Cinq," I remember, took stout with his oysters, and Ben drank champagne with his! The tales those two told! And what a job we had making the passage at three o'clock in the morning along Lambton Quay, up Willis Street, through Manners Street and across Cuba Street to the Oak! Now Cinquavalli and Ben Tillet are both gone. One made his mark as an entertainer, the other as a fiery fighter for the underdog, as a reformer of injustices to workers, and as a dynamic personage in and out of Britain's House of Commons.



★ LT.-COL. C. M. BENNETT, who led the Maoris into Tripoli. Colonel Bennett, who is not yet 30, is a son of the Rt. Rev. F. A. Bennett, Bishop of Ao-tea-roa, and when the war broke out, was on the announcing staff of 2YA.

"Infinite Grace And Delicacy"

Mozart's Pianoforte Trios

(By FREDERICK PAGE)

WHEN are we to have a little chamber music in your house? I have composed a new trio." So wrote Mozart in a postscript to a letter to a friend begging for funds. It was the trio in E Major, the third of six, for piano, violin, and 'cello, that will be broadcast from 3YA on alternate Monday evenings from February 15.

Like much of Mozart's music, with the pianoforte sonatas, and the sonatas for pianoforte and violin, these trios have been badly underestimated. Only recently, in Christchurch, did a pianist play the third movement of the sonata in F (K.332), and omit the first and second movements, possibly the richest in invention of all his piano sonatas, on the score that they were not of sufficient interest. These trios have been frequently dismissed. Both amateur and professional players pass them by, perhaps because they listen to music with nineteenth century ears, and want from Mozart what he is not prepared to give.

Certainly these works do not make a big noise. One can easily imagine Mozart himself playing in them with some of his congenial Salzburg friends. How he would have brought out their intensity of expression, that play on the imagination which we associate with the word "Mozartian!" Like the pianoforte concertos, with their world of splendour and poetry, like the operas, with their dramatic force, these trios live in their own world of infinite grace and delicacy. There are few more ravishing slow movements, even in Mozart, than that in the second trio in B flat, few more radiant melodies than that in the last movement of the E major. The first, too, in G major, offers continual surprises, the fifth, also in G Major, a fount of melody.

Seeing Red

By WHIM-WHAM

[Hitler did not attend the meeting in Berlin to celebrate the tenth birthday of the Nazi Party. Goebbels explained that Hitler regretted being unable to leave his headquarters where he was "conducting great defensive battles." All the Nazi leaders emphasised the danger of the Russian offensive, and pictured Germany as the protector of Europe against Bolshevism]

THE Fuehrer has asked me to say
That he's sorry he cannot attend.
He cannot be with us To-day
While critical Battles impend.
The Fuehrer regrets it as much
As any of us, it is clear;
But the present Position is such
That he hasn't the time to be here.

OH, soberly Heil him again!
The Aryan Atmosphere's tense,
The Fuehrer, we're bound to explain,
Is up to his Eyes in Defence;
And Goering and Goebbels (that's me)
Are doing the Best that we can
To make One and One equal Three
And Confusion resemble a Plan.

THE Line for the Party to take
Is "Bolshevik Threat to the West."

Oh, when will the British awake
And see it was All for the Best
That the Fuehrer resorted to War?—
And when will Americans learn
That the Safety of Europe—no More—
Obliges us to slaughter and burn?

OH, once we had only to mention
The Communist Menace, to scare
The World, and divert its Attention
From What we were doing Else-
where.

Now, redder than ever we thought it,
That Menace has struck from behind;
Alone we have faced it and fought it—
And Nobody Else seems to mind!