

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday

Price Threepence

DECEMBER 3, 1943

## Men of England

IT is not specially *The Listener's* business to explain, or ask, why three prominent newspaper owners visited New Zealand last week. It is sufficient for us that they did come and saw as much of our way of life as could be seen in five or six days. The simplest explanation, if we wanted one, would be Sir Walter Layton's statement that they came here to thank us for our services in the war and to get a realistic view of our problems and background—good reasons, both of them, for a hurried visit if the alternative was no visit at all. But there was one important result of the visit which everyone would have grasped if it had been possible for everyone to see these men and talk to them. They were themselves England—England in their poise, their confidence, and their humour. If they felt after two or three days that New Zealanders were now people and not statistical abstractions, we could feel before they went away why the Battle of Britain remained a battle and did not become a stampede. Meeting them and listening to them was not meeting and listening to the average Englishman, for the average Englishman knows what anxiety and poverty are and not one of these three had ever been within two generations of the bread line; but it was meeting and listening to average products of an English liberal education, and it gave us something to think about. We perhaps can give England something to think about too, but that concerns England more than it concerns us. What concerns us is the fact that three totally different types of men, representing different interests and following different philosophies, all had the qualities that carry men calmly through crises. We began by calling it poise. We could have called it a sense of proportion or educated self-control. But whatever name we give it the quality was there; it was the expression of a tradition; and the younger a nation is the more it requires traditions to hold it steady in adversity.

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

### "OUTLAW'S PROGRESS"

Sir,—I cannot criticise your criticism of *Outlaw's Progress*, which is both more judicious and more discerning than one I have written for another medium. But I do think that you have allowed little for the difficulties of writing New Zealand fiction and should have allowed much. English authors work over ground brought into fruitfulness by predecessors. For example, Jane Austen followed on Fanny Burney, and Emily Bronte, George Eliot, and Trollope, on Jane Austen and so on. These writers were both original and greatly gifted, but like Greek artists, they wrought to concepts not only worked out by their forerunners, but accepted and approved by their publics. The New Zealand writer of fiction is a pioneer in a position somewhat analogous to that of a man who goes on to a bush section with the arduous task of lonehanded turning it into a mixed farm.

F. L. COMBS (Wellington).

### FILM NOTES

Scores of readers have written or telephoned to ask what has happened to G.M. Nothing has happened to him, but holidays are as good for critics as for their readers. He will be back again. Meanwhile, we appreciate these proofs of his popularity.

### MIXED MEALS

Sir,—Dr. Bell raises the question of the eating of starch and protein at the same meal. Yes, there seem to be many people who eat mixed meals and keep healthy; but colds and rheumatism and stomach troubles are very prevalent, and doctors have not yet told us why this should be. In my teens I had an attack of rheumatic fever, and afterwards was continually suffering from stomach trouble and rheumatism. Doctors gave me temporary relief. Naturally I searched for a permanent cure. I turned vegetarian, but other troubles arose—pulmonary; colds were a nightmare. Six years ago I began the starch and protein regime—separate. Always the lean kind, I have at last gained weight, have an excellent appetite, taste my food much better, and what is vital, have lost the old complaints, and rarely get a cold. What I find commendable about this diet is—hunger is not always gnawing a hole in one's stomach, and one can eat anything, provided the mixture is right. My rule is—nothing acid with a starch meal, which can include vegetable salads and sweets and sweet fruits, and no sweets or starch with a protein meal, which should always include vegetables or salads and acid fruits.

HEALTH FIEND (Wellington).

(Dr. Bell, at our request, replies: "It is always a puzzle to know how it is possible to be consistent in this particular dietary regime when green vegetables contain about as much protein as they do carbohydrate, bread contains one part of protein to every five parts starch (and 'starch-reduced' bread one of protein to two or three of starch), milk contains one part of protein to one part of carbohydrate, peas contain one part of protein to three parts of starch. At what particular level of combination of protein and carbohydrate does one draw the line?

"Sometimes people stumble on the thing that suits them, and give the wrong explanation for it. Some years ago, I was discussing

this particular regime with a doctor friend who is an F.R.C.P.; we came to the conclusion that in the cases where it is successful, it might do one of several things: (1) Convince the patient through the very strength of its assertions (2) Decrease the total carbohydrate and the total calories (3) Eliminate entirely a food towards which a patient has an allergy.

"That it does sometimes eliminate a food entirely—not always to the benefit of the patient—can be illustrated from the following instance. A woman whose husband would not allow his children to eat meat and potatoes at the same meal, told me with a worried look that as they took their meal to school, where they could not very well eat potatoes all by themselves, and as they had their meat meal in the evening, the ultimate result was that they ate no potatoes at all, and 'they were so fond of them, too.' I have no doubt that many a potato was surreptitiously eaten before father came home.

"A strong claim is more convincing than a weak one, if neither can be proved; this might easily have been Hitler's motto, as it has been the guiding principle of many a cult that has its day and then ceases to be. Those of us with memories remember the Abrams Box; no less a person than Upton Sinclair believed in it. In those days of 20 years ago, radio was a mystery, and the Abrams Box convinced those who did not understand radio and electricity. Earlier than that, before people understood electricity and magnetism, Elisha Perkins claimed to draw disease from the body by means of two rods, one of brass and the other of iron. When wood was substituted for the metals, physicians still got the same marvellous results. Perkins himself made a fortune, and then joined the Quakers.").

### MIND OR GLANDS?

Sir,—It is evident from your article referring to Frank Sinatra that there are crowds of hysterical women in the U.S.A. Orson Welles could put the fear of death into them by a voice over the radio, then a large proportion of the general public must also be excitable and emotional. But exactly the same results have been seen at religious revival meetings, or similar gatherings. Women have been seen to throw themselves on the floor, kick their feet in the air and scream out to God to save them. What I am surprised at is the information that the psychiatrists are baffled, as usually they have an explanation for everything. The general conclusion is that this state of hysteria has something originally to do with the mind, which the psychiatrist claims to know all about. But I think the trouble is deeper and perhaps the science of endocrinology has the explanation we require. The difference between a person who is morbidly emotional and one under proper control, is usually just a question of the proper supply of adrenalin discharged into the blood stream. We have it on good authority that the endocrine glands control appearances, impulses, fears and general behaviour. A person of normal intelligence may differ from an idiot because his thyroid gland gives him two milligrams more iodine every day.

"ARGOSY" (Te Awamutu).

### TO HOE OR NOT TO HOE?

Sir,—The other day you quoted a report from the authorities at Rothamstead casting considerable doubt on the commonly-accepted theory that plenty of hoeing is needed in the vegetable garden. Subsequently, in a Dig for Victory radio talk, I heard an Auckland speaker telling us that now that we'd got most of our seeds planted, we shouldn't rest on our laurels, but should hoe like mad. Well, sir, I'm born lazy, but I do want a garden full of vegetables. Which authority am I to believe?

HOEPFUL (Wellington).