

# Your Personality

How much do you know about your personality? Do you appreciate that it is your personality that distinguishes you from all other people; that makes you in yourself unique; that there is in the world no one else just like you.

As used by psychologists, personality means what the individual has become through the interaction between inborn qualities and association with others. Thus there are broadly two factors in shaping what is to become the you whom people either like or dislike, that determine whether you shall be happy or discontented, successful or just moderately so.

Take, for example, the problem of failure. There is probably no greater single cause of unhappiness than the feeling of being a failure. Lack of success by other people we can bear with equanimity. Our own cuts us to the quick. What is there, we ask ourselves, that makes us fail where we feel we should succeed? "What is wrong with my personality that I do not get on with people?" is the question of the person who feels a failure.

The answers are various. It may be the goal set was too high; that one is a "round peg in a square hole," but most likely that one is carrying around within oneself hidden conflicts that warp the personality.

Somewhere in the course of life something happened to give a twist to what otherwise would have been a perfectly normal personality. It may have had its origin in an unsatisfactory home life, an unfortunate experience as a child, or over-ambitious parents. Consequently, the defect became interwoven in the pattern of the individual's life.

Like a malignant growth it destroys what it feeds upon. The person does not understand what is happening. All he knows is that there is something wrong with him that affects his relations with other people, and that he is not a "success." Thoughts turn inward. A brooding upon the sense of failure, of unworthiness, or being somehow the victim of circumstances takes possession of the person.

The next step is all too often a "nervous breakdown." In earlier days the person would in polite terms be said to suffer from "a mysterious visitation of Providence," and by the vulgar to be a "lunatic." Psychological research, with its feet firmly rooted in human behaviour, sees merely a form of mental sickness that has its origin in the life pattern of the individual.

The progress of remedial treatment of mental illness is little short of revolutionary. It has torn down the cobwebs that gave gruesome form to fear, superstition and hoodoos of the past. There is no excuse today for propagating the stigma formerly associated with mental sickness. It is merely a form of illness. Like any other indisposition to which we humans are subject it is easily cured if treated early. If neglected, as a scratch on the finger sometimes is, then remedial measures are longer, more complex. The simple, commonsense thing to remember is that mental sickness can be treated successfully.

New Zealand probably leads the world in modernising her mental hospitals. Old buildings are being renovated. New ones are built on the villa system to provide a maximum of sunlight, comfort and an atmosphere of tranquillity. A pointer to this new deal is that in 1913 only 39 people voluntarily entered mental hospitals. In 1953 there were 1178 voluntary admissions, and 987 were discharged as recovered.

Medical and psychological research has made tremendous advances towards an understanding of personality problems. It has made clear that the majority of causes of mental breakdown arise out of the pattern of our lives.

There is nothing to be ashamed about a personality disturbance. The important thing is to know about yourself. To remember that your personality is a compound of emotion, spirit, and a complex set of social attitudes (what you think about people and things), developed in a highly competitive and complex social organisation. Woven into your social attitudes are the ridiculous and old-fashioned notions about mental illness and the institutions in which it is treated. These notions no more belong to 1954 than does the belief that witches ride broomsticks.

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**E**VEN in this so-called "man's world" there's nowhere so exclusively masculine as a battlefield. Korea being no exception, women travelling there must tread warily. According to the Auckland soprano Dorothy Hopkins (below), an advance-guard is necessary. "When we went swimming," she said, "they had to clear the men out of the Imjin. There were about 10,000 of them, and about two had bathing suits."

Mrs. Hopkins toured the Korean battlefronts last year with an NZBS concert party. She found living conditions



rugged, but described the tour generally as fun. "We gave them good music," she said, "and they liked it. I've had plenty of fan mail since."

Now in her middle twenties, Dorothy Hopkins started piano studies at the age of five, and took up singing seriously at 15. She gained her A.T.C.L. in the piano, and L.T.C.L. in singing, and is now one of the relatively few Fellows of Trinity College, London (F.T.C.L.). For this it was necessary to give a complete programme, ranging from folk songs to oratorio parts. At the same time she studied at Auckland Teachers' Training College, graduating as a music specialist. She is now a private teacher, after having spent two years as a travelling music teacher in schools. Apart from her Korean tour, she toured New Zealand for the NZBS in 1951, and has twice toured Auckland country districts for the Community Arts Service. In addition, she has done much broadcasting and a good deal of solo work for various musical societies. She was a leading soloist at Auckland's Coronation Concert last year.

When interviewed by *The Listener* Mrs. Hopkins was in Wellington to give some studio recitals and to record a programme with the National Orchestra of the NZBS. This latter will be broadcast by all YA stations at 2.0 p.m. on Sunday, August 15. The solo items are "The Wretch Now Thou Knowest," from *Don Giovanni*, and "God of Love," from *The Marriage of Figaro*, both by Mozart, and "Softly Sighs," from *Der Freischütz*, by Weber.

**W**HAT sort of a bloke is he? This is the question people have been asking about Norris Collins since they heard his seven talks on his visit to Russia broadcast from Main National

# Open Microphone

stations and read the extracts printed in *The Listener*. And, "What sort of a bloke are you?" is in effect the question we put to Mr. Collins on behalf of listeners. As many may have

gathered from his talk about religion in the Soviet Union, Mr. Collins is very interested in his Church, and his main spare time activities are Church activities. "I'm an Anglican and a Diocesan lay-reader, a member of the Christchurch Diocese Public and Social Affairs Committee, and of the local Church Committee, and I'm a Sunday School Superintendent," he told us. "Then I'm also Dominion Vice-President of the Anglican Bible Class Union and a member of other youth councils and committees, and in my spare time I run a youth club and organise social activities and camps for young people."

We didn't see how Mr. Collins could have any spare time for activities of that sort, but while we were thinking that one out he told us that he was born in England and came to New Zealand when he was seven. Now aged 34, he is married and has a nine-year-old son. He works as a boilermaker at the Addington Railway Workshops, where he is a member of the union committee, union representative on the workshop committee, and chairman of the workshop W.E.A. committee. There, too, he has "a couple of other jobs" to keep him busy.

At this stage we hardly liked to ask about recreation, and when we did Mr. Collins admitted he hadn't much time for it these days. He'd been, he said, a "barely average" Soccer player, though he'd made the First XI at Christchurch Technical College, and once to his surprise he'd won a handicap cup for ten-



Norris Collins

nis in the local club, where he served a few years as President. Nowadays, he said, his "spare time" went into his garden, which he found a most satisfying recreation. He was also secretary of the Heathcote Domain Board. He had been a fully qualified film projectionist before joining the railways as an apprentice, and at first kept it up as a hobby and spare time interest; but there was no time for it now.

When we asked Mr. Collins how he came to join the delegation that visited Russia he said he was nominated by his union which, with his workmates, looked after his family while he was away.

## RAISED EYEBROWS DEPARTMENT

**W**HEN the BBC broadcast a radio version of "The Scarlet Pimpernel," they needed the sound of a luckless Frenchman being guillotined. They achieved it by a remarkable combination of noises which, when recorded, produced a most gruesomely realistic effect. A very long straight saw was borrowed from the effects department and, while a studio manager played a little side drum, the saw was drawn downwards across the iron upright of a grand piano. When it reached the bottom Marius Goring, the actor who was playing Sir Percy, hacked a large cabbage in half with a sword and threw the pieces into a wicker basket, while various members of the cast who were standing by made suitable noises of ghoul-ish satisfaction. The result was so successfully appalling that the recording is now in the BBC's effects library for use whenever a guillotine features in a radio production—BBC "London Letter."

Later he was selected in a ballot at a meeting of all who supported the delegation. His fare was raised by the organising committee from among well-wishers—there was no official support from the trade union movement. "My nomination was something I'd never dreamed of or expected, though I supported the idea of the delegation," Mr. Collins said. "Within two or three weeks of my nomination I was on the way."



★ THEY flew through the air in a variety of ways during Women's Hour at Station 4ZB recently, when the twin arts of ju-jitsu and judo were demonstrated by Dutch new settler, Miss Truus de Vries and a New Zealander, Miss Dorothea Beecham, before a studio audience during the programme. Prudence Gregory, Women's Hour Personality at 4ZB, is seen here giving a running commentary, with Miss de Vries on the left, and Miss Beecham, right. ★