

# Dear Sir, or Madam...

"DEAR PRUE," wrote Richard Steele to his wife in one of those two or three-line notes he was fond of sending her, "Dear Prue. Sober or not, I am, ever yours, Richard Steele."

Most men and women write love letters at some time of their lives, whether despairing or pleading, triumphant, sloppy or sternly practical. Or if they don't write love letters they write letters of the type, "Dear Sir, . . . Yours faithfully"; or those like "This account is now overdue"; or letters which begin, "Dear Mum, please send seven shillings."

Letters, and the art of writing them, are the subject of eight illustrated talks by Professor Ian Gordon, Professor of English at Victoria University College, to be broadcast weekly from 2YC on Tuesdays, beginning March 8, at 9.37 p.m. The talks consist of two on the Love Letter, followed by the Gossip and Family Letter, the Travel Letter, the Public Letter, the Business Letter, the Please - do - me - a - favour Letter, and the Letters for the Letter's Sake. The talks will subsequently be repeated from the other YC stations.

Customs and modes of living may change, language may change, but human nature goes on much the same. "Right reverend and worshipful father, I recommend me unto you. I have received from my uncle a letter and a noble



of gold therein. My housemaster recommends himself to you and he prayeth you to send him the money for my board, for he saveth you are twenty shillings in his debt. . . ."

Apparently the cost of living can change, too; that letter was written by a schoolboy in 1478.

Letters are also a source of historical material of the type which seldom appears in orthodox history books. For instance, one 15th Century housewife sent her absent husband a shopping list which illustrates why they called it merry England: she wanted some material for her hat and for her children's dresses, almonds and sugar for the kitchen, and two or three poleaxes and some crossbows because it looked as if the neighbours were about to attack the house.

A series of letters can tell a dramatic story. "Dear Mr. Browning . . . faithfully yours, and gratefully, Elizabeth B. Barrett"—that letter was about literary criticism. "God bless you, my dear friend. . . R. Browning"—so was that one. "May God bless you my own, my precious, I am all your own. R.B."—that one was not. "On Tuesday, at last, I am with you. Till then, be with me ever, dearest. R.B."—that one was about details of the elopement, and after which there was no need of letters between R. Browning and Elizabeth B. Barrett.

Coming Round the Bend . . .

. . . with Denis Glover

## SEVERAL TYPES OF TYPES

HE'S an army type. He sticks his hands into his pockets as if they contained Mills bombs, and his belly looks like a landmine, short-fused to his face.

HE'S an air-force type. There's no grey in the slipstream of his hair, and he strokes his moustaches as if they were butterfly wings, or some rare orchid.

HE'S a navy type. When he laughs it is very loud, and he talks endlessly. Oh, that windy emotion they call the Silent Service!

HE'S a civilian type. You can tell he's never been in the services: he doesn't walk, he shambles. His anecdotes are pointless and his arms wave about like aimless cranes. He has no particular occupation, and no mannerisms. Therefore a dull fellow.

HE'S a lawyer type. Delightful, socially, with never an opinion to express. His jokes about the law have age-old precedents. He cocks his head sideways, purses his lips, and considers your idle remark as if it were a Supreme Court judgment in writing.

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 4, 1955.

HE'S a sheep-farmer type. Shoulders as broad as tractor wheels, and large, clumsy, sensitive hands. He looks unnaturally healthy. His language to his dogs is impeccably fluent standard English, even if the words are not in the dictionary.

HE'S a life-insurance type. You know that at once because when introduced to a roomful of people he never misses a name. And his conversational questions are always so flatteringly personal.

HE'S a doctor type. "Ah!" he says, and looks incredibly profound. In private he complains about his indigestion, and prophesies his weak heart will finish him off. But he won't see a doctor.

HE'S a schoolmaster type. A mass of noble, vague ideals and a fund of irrelevant facts. He believes in impartial justice, with himself as prosecutor and judge. Roman in his virtues, he draws inexhaustibly on six Latin tags.

HE'S a journalist type. He looks on tragedies, detached, cool, unmoved: a poor little doggie without a home makes him burst into two-column tears.

## Cricketers Satisfied

A LETTER received by the Director of Broadcasting (Mr. William Yates) from Mr. E. E. Luttrell, secretary to the New Zealand Cricket Council, places on record the Council's appreciation of the coverage given by the NZBS to the 1954-55 Test series.

"I am desired by my Committee," wrote Mr. Luttrell, "to express to you its appreciation of the splendid service you have arranged in the broadcasting of the current Test match series in Australia. The general comment here, and indeed throughout the Dominion, amongst cricketers and public alike, is most appreciative. We offer you our thanks."

## WAKE UP YOUR LIVER BILE -

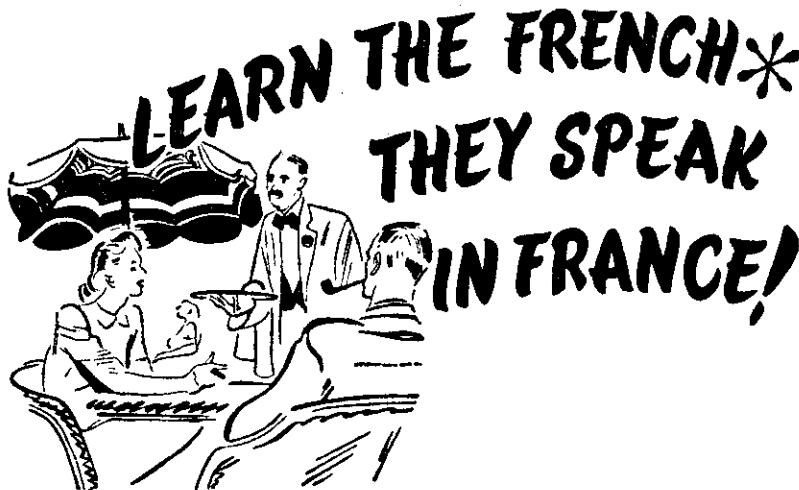
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