

## LETTERS TO THE FAMOUS

If you were able to write to any of the distinguished people in history whom would you choose? Would it be Louis Braille, Freud, Mrs. Beeton, Cervantes, Boadicea, Lord Shaftesbury, Gutenberg, Edith Cavell? In a letter to any of them it would be appropriate that you sign yourself "Respectfully yours," because, different as they are in period, nationality, outlook, they were all individualists who gave of themselves to the world. After them, the world has not been the same.

Now a series of half-hour dramatic episodes under the title *Respectfully Yours* has been produced for ZB stations and 2ZA. It will follow *For the Defence* at 9.0 p.m. on Saturdays, beginning on April 9. The people who are the subjects of each episode are men and women who achieved their objectives or carried out their activities often in the face of opposition or apathy from their contemporaries. Their motives are to be found in their belief that what they were doing was right whether they thought it was on their own behalf or for the general good.

There was Father Damien, the turbulent priest who gave his life for the lepers of Molokai; Sir James Young Simpson, the Scots doctor who was the first to demonstrate the effectiveness of anaesthetics; Mary Ann Bickerdyke, the Florence Nightingale of the American Civil War; Nils Gustav Dalen, the Swede who invented the automatic beacon and the acetylene torch, losing his eyesight in the process; Sir Harry Lauder; Daisy Bates, a small, frail Englishwoman who devoted her life to the welfare of the most primitive Australian aboriginals; and Elias Howe, who invented the sewing-machine very much as we now know it.

*Respectfully Yours* does not take all its material from the illustrious dead. The series includes the stories of Commander Kerans, of the frigate *Amethyst*, whose dash down the Yangtse made headlines in 1949, and of Odette Churchill, and her work for the French resistance movement.

### The Voice of Rupert Brooke

How far did the famous war sonnets of Rupert Brooke reflect the thoughts and ideals of the young men of 1914? Or were they only the thoughts of Brooke himself? "Well, it's hard to look back over 40 years and try to recapture the exact feelings of that time. But it seems to me that Brooke, in expressing what he felt, really did echo the thoughts of many of us. I feel he is a good representative of the generous impulses of his age and generation." This is the opinion of the former Principal of Christchurch Boys' High School, A. E. Caddick, in a talk to be heard in *Book Shop* on April 27, commemorating the 40th anniversary of Brooke's death. But, he adds, "One can't help speculating—though it's idle to do so—if he would have retained his high ideal if he had lived to experience the actual fighting on Gallipoli or in Flanders; or if he would have followed the same road as Siegfried Sassoon."

Mr. Caddick illustrates his talk with short quotations from the five sonnets, sonnets which "will remain a beacon light of high endeavour—of a love not merely of country but of the common pleasures of life that seemed threatened and were worth fighting for."

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 22, 1955.

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