

HOW TO LOOK BACK

NOT to be interested in the past is to be forever a child, said Cicero, and to that proposition J. J. Saunders adds a fervent "hear, hear" in *Approach to History*, a series of talks now being heard from 2YC, and later to be heard from other YC stations. Mr. Saunders, who is senior lecturer in History at Canterbury University College, says we probably read history chiefly out of sheer intellectual curiosity—to know what happened in the past and to find out how the present has come to be what it is. But it is also a means of attaining self-knowledge, which the Greeks held to be the goal of true wisdom. As a collective biography of mankind it helps to deepen our knowledge of human nature, and so of ourselves. It is a preservative against parochialism, and a cure for "present-mindedness," that obsession with what is happening here and now which can produce dangerous and irrational excess of optimism or pessimism. "The man who knows no history," says Mr. Saunders, "thinks in times of relative peace and prosperity that the millennium is just round the corner; and in times of war and revolution and economic collapse that the human race is finished and that we may as well cease to struggle against inevitable fate."

But even when we have decided, for one reason or another, that history is a useful study, there are a number of different ways in which we can approach it. These are what Mr. Saunders discusses in his talks. Listeners who have



J. J. SAUNDERS

been hearing the series from 2YC will already have heard Mr. Saunders on the ways of Providence. At the end of his second talk, "Cross-examining the Witnesses," he reaches the point where historians are ceasing to bother about the ways of Providence: man, they feel, makes his own history, and God, having as it were wound up the universe like a gigantic clock, has left it to run on its own way. In his next talk, to be broadcast at 8.15 p.m. on Monday, May 16, he turns to an examination of Humanist history, and particularly to one of its most notable examples, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. Other talks are "Romantic Nationalism," "Ideas in Action," and "Marxism and the Masses."

(continued from previous page)

He wrote to the local office, he sent wires to the head office and he went in the end to see his M.P.

But the M.P., who had left his rifle in Greece, was not very helpful. The trousers had not been ruined, he pointed out, so he could hardly claim for a new pair. And besides, any man who took only one pair of trousers on his honeymoon was asking for trouble. Which set Bill explaining all over again about the trousers that had gone on in the checked luggage. But the M.P. and the Railways were both firm on the point, so Bill had to give way.

But he was not finished. Oh, no. If he couldn't get the price of the new trousers, he would recover the cost of dry-cleaning the old. So with that indomitable bulldog pugnacity of his, he plunged again into battle. The Railways would pay him 5/- for the dry-cleaning, or he would take the case to the highest court in the land.

After weeks of negotiation, victory came at last. The Railways agreed to pay. Bill was filled with a deep satisfaction. As he told his wife, it never paid to let people get away with things. A man should always stand on his rights.

Bill's wife was inclined to disagree. To get his 5/- from the Railways, she pointed out, it had cost him exactly 5/6—made up of two telegrams amounting to 2/9, a toll call at 1/3, and postage stamps to the value of 1/6. Where was his victory now?

But Bill was stubborn to the last. "The principle's the thing," he told her. "A man must stick up for his rights. Otherwise where would we be?" And where, he might have added, would they have been without Bill's rifle in the Battle of Crete?

Service Section

Readers with special problems in the care and maintenance of radio receiving sets are invited to send inquiries to the Editor of "The Listener." Names and addresses are required. Wherever possible, replies will be given, either in "The Listener" or by letter.

E. BEE (Pukemiro): It is possible that a realignment of the receiver would help to give a better separation of the stations, but the poor selectivity shown by this relatively low-priced receiver at the high frequency end of the broadcast band is likely to be inherent. The use of a wave trap is unlikely to be helpful. A wave trap is most suited for preventing a strong local station from causing interference when the receiver is tuned to a distant station.

INTERESTED READER (Southland): If your receiving set has been left on when your local station has gone off the air, the noise you hear is generated by electrical storms and by imperfect electrical machinery. The primary service area—that is, the area within which noise-free, non-fading reception should be possible—extends 50-100 miles from a broadcasting station. Beyond that range the signal strength is low, fading may occur, and noise is likely to be noticeable.



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