

READY-MADE EMOTIONS

MARK TWAIN said he found it easier to manufacture seven facts than one emotion. My emotions are ready made. I don't have to think myself into my loves and hates but to think myself out of them. When the calf blew a lungful of milk into my face this morning as I stooped to hold the bucket from getting butted over, I gave her a smack over the nose

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and then began to think. I should of course have thought first: that she is a week or two old; that the Creator made her to suck and not to gulp; that holding her head down does as much violence to her nervous system as it would do to mine to drink standing from a bottle on the ground; that the temperature of the milk was about 40 degrees instead of nearly 100; that I was looking for trouble when I held my face so low; than a calf's head anywhere else. And so on. But I was not reared among Quakers—if those good people are ever found in cowsheds. I can sit as silent as a Friend waiting for Betty to "let down" her milk, and once when she stood on my foot I pushed her off without violence. But there is nothing in my background that makes it easy for me to be spat on. I have never owned, or led, or ridden a camel. But camels spit. And if one spat in my face without provocation—the quantity but not the colour is about the same as I received from the calf—I would do what a fine Christian I once knew did to a Black Watch officer who caught him by the short hair on his neck and asked what he meant by coming in on parade with that. Tom was given

a dishonourable discharge and came to New Zealand to be one of the good and faithful servants whose lives give a meaning to righteousness.

R.R.D.M. writes from Northland to warn me that the bird watchers will be after me for saying that "dotterels are the only birds which travel east to west over the Tasman." Well it is not disturbing to be chased by bird watchers. It is stimulating, and for anyone as ignorant as I am, mildly flattering. But if I am in fact being chased, it is

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a leisurely chase. It is exactly a month since I exposed myself, and so far my pursuers have not caught up with me. Perhaps they are still digesting their Christmas dinners.

But R.R.D.M. is probably right in supposing that I am wrong. He is better grounded in this field than I am, and he can remember reading about a year ago that a young gannet ringed (he thinks in Hawke's Bay) had been found in New South Wales a few days (or weeks) later. It is difficult to believe that dotterels are the "only" birds in the habit of crossing the Tasman, and I find, when I look at him again, that the Australian ornithologist whose remark I quoted was not so careless as to say that they were. What he said was that dotterels, as far as he knew, were the only "regular east-west across-the-ocean migrants." It was I who was careless in omitting "regular," though something approaching regularity is implied in "migrants." If gannets cross to Australia year by year, or even frequently, dotterels lose their distinction. They lose it if there are other east-

by "SUNDOWNER"

west migrants. But I have not read of any others. In his revised and enlarged edition of *New Zealand Birds* W.R.B. Oliver says that "gannets ringed in New Zealand have been taken on the coasts of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia." This supports R.R.D.M.'s memory, but does not prove that gannets go west regularly.

The most interesting question is not how many New Zealand birds spend the winter in southern Australia, but why any do, since it is difficult to see a climatic reason.

THOUGH I found no proof in any of my books that gannets make the east-west crossing of the Tasman every winter, I found evidence that the first gannets observed in New Zealand were examined with some thoroughness. Here is an extract from the

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Journal of Sir Joseph Banks to which I was led by Dr. Oliver but which I quote from Dr. Beaglehole:

24 December, 1769. Land in sight; an island or rather several small ones, most probably the Three Kings. From a boat they killed several Gannets or Solan Geese, so like European ones that they are hardly distinguishable from them. As it was the humour of the ship to keep Christmas in the old fashioned way it was resolved of them to make a Goose pye for tomorrows dinner.

25 December, 1769. Christmas day: our Goose pye was eat with great approbation in the Evening all hands where as Drunk as our forefathers used to be upon the like occasion.

26 December, 1769. This morn all heads achd with yesterdays debauch.

Fat Goose, washed down with rum, is not my idea of a happy Christmas; but I have never reached Christmas after weeks on pork and biscuits.

A NEW ZEALANDER'S first thought in an accident is a doctor. An American's is a camera. When we hit a power pole or roll down a bank we leave the world without witnesses; as a dozen or more drivers of cars have done during the last three weeks. When an American woman jumps from the Hudson Bridge a photographer gets

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her before she reaches the water. Our last thought is an American's first. But I am glad that most of the camera men were caught napping when the Russians opened fire in Budapest before the smoke had cleared from the Suez Canal. It does not often happen that two world crises of equal news value develop simultaneously; but when it does happen it helps nobody to get all the sensations and very few of the facts. Let there be light whatever happens in the world, but let it be the full light. When a reporter starts for Egypt and is switched in the air to Hungary; when cameras directed at the Suez Canal are focused finally on the Danube, events have moved too fast for anything but an accidentally true record. So I am not disappointed to be waiting still for the close-ups of disaster. It is better to cool down before they come; to have made up our minds about their meaning and their value; and to remember that when reporters and photographers catch up on lost scoops they have too much information to be mere sensationalists.

(To be continued)

FARMING THERE AND HERE

A DISTINGUISHED delegate to the International Grasslands Congress recently held at Massey College was Professor M. M. Cooper, a former New Zealand Rhodes Scholar who is now Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at Durham University, England. An authority on grasslands, Professor Cooper, who has spoken several times on the BBC, has recorded two talks for the NZBS Farm Session. The second of these will be heard from 2YA on February 4, and later they will be heard from other stations.

In his first talk Professor Cooper describes the expansion of British agriculture since the war. His first post in England was at Wye Agricultural College, where he tried to apply those principles of New Zealand agriculture which he considered sound. After describing his results he goes on to mention such topics as the English subsidy system and the effect on farming efficiency of many of the present outmoded farm buildings.

The second talk gives his impressions of the New Zealand scene after an absence of 10 years. The most striking changes he considered were the development of the pumice country on the central plateau and the growth of aerial top-dressing. He ends with a warning about New Zealand's agricultural economy which at present relies almost exclusively on pastoral products—wool, fat lambs and dairy produce. As world competition in the meat market becomes keener he considers that some time in the future we may have to develop a more balanced type of husbandry which will include the growing of far more wheat than at present.



GANNETS AT CAPE KIDNAPPERS

Why should they winter in Southern Australia?