

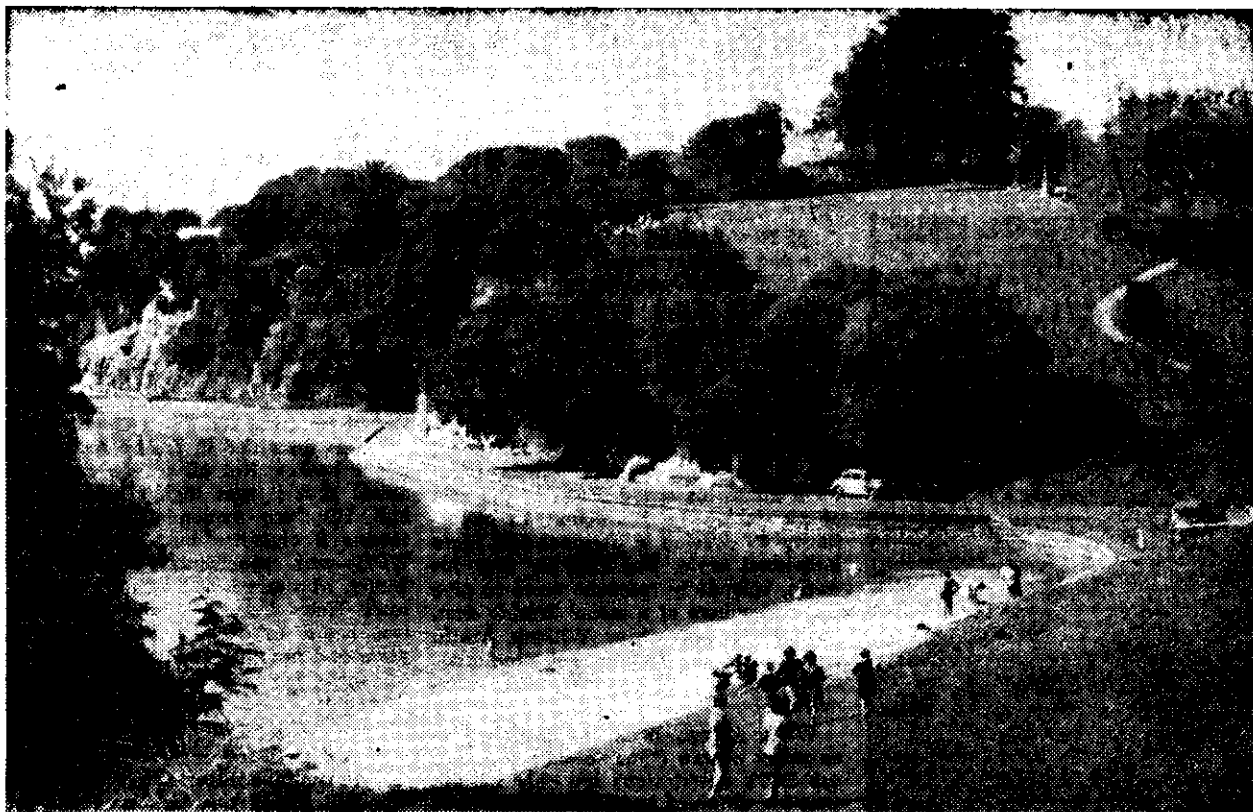
JUDGES BAY

IS it on the plinth of the Albert Memorial, or somewhere on the equally stupefying exterior of the Albert Hall, that Beauty and Commerce are shown genially hand in hand? I can't remember; but a current dispute in Auckland has made me wonder again whether the idea was ever more than one of those Victorian wishful-thinkings which we, our sentimentalities safe in another quarter, now find so risible.

Anyhow, Beauty and Commerce are at loggerheads here at the moment, and are likely to be always disagreeing except in a Queen Carnival, when B. is exploiting C. for her own advancement, and C. is exploiting B. for cash. I wish I could think the lady likely to survive the present head-on collision; but my cynical self doubts it strongly.

The question is: Shall the Railways Department expand along the already cluttered foreshore of Auckland, and put its new railway sidings at Judges Bay? The Ayes appear as usual intensely practical, seeing only one need for Auckland, and that a commercial need. They are also (and also as usual), inclined to dub the Noes a lot of sentimental nincompoops, to slap on to them the adjective "hysterical," much as the words "fellow-traveller" were recently being applied by reactionaries in England to anyone whose views they didn't happen to like. Obviously, both sides can't be wholly right, as neither can be wholly wrong. Myself, I'm obstinately one of the Noes.

For Judges Bay is one of the few gracious and still lovely remnants of a spoilt city. It is one of the few beauties still left along the waterfront as you go from the squalid horrors of Quay Street towards the more sophisticated, more modern, and more fashionable squalors of Mission Bay, where rotting pumpkins, decayed cabbage stumps and broken beer bottles are the only harvest of the hopeful beach-comber. Judges Bay is small, and, like Jane Austen's talent, none the worse for that. It is, in spite of the bellowing



of swimming coaches, brayings of an enraptured public, and squawks of at least three loudspeakers in the adjacent Parnell Baths, a fairly quiet bay. Named after our first Chief Justice, who built himself a home in the new-cleared bush above the water, it has one of the prettiest churchyards even in this city, where so many old churchyards are delightful. The few houses that stand, spaced among trees, along its gentle slope, are mostly old: the grass is true Auckland green, an indescribably tender colour except in February and March, when it turns to a fiercer bronze. And all this is only five minutes by car from the centre of the city.

All very well, say the men of commerce, brushing aside everything but this last item, yet—What right have the fortunate minority in the Bay to go on enjoying themselves at the expense

of the majority? Or, as a correspondent to the press more waspishly observes: "Is the port of Auckland to be strangled because a few people wish to live in a rural setting within a mile of Queen Street?" The writer signs himself "Looking Ahead" rather oddly. For, if he looked clearly ahead, he would see the already teetering railway system of this country as dead as the moa; and the proposed railway sidings, having ruined the Bay, themselves crumbling into unwanted ruins, and very ugly ones at that.

Obviously, though, it's no use calling upon the hallowed nature of the site, when immediate money-making is in the offing. History, Chief Justice, St. Stephen's Church and St. Stephen's Churchyard can be ranged in saintly array against mere gain, *ad nauseum* and utterly in vain. One must produce practical arguments—*Motor Vehicles Instead of Trains Urged for Wharf*, as one headline has it. Here, an advocate of purring petrol against screaming steam has the temerity to say, "The use of trains for carrying to the wharves was out of date years ago." He then strikes a more homely note by bringing in butter: it seems to me that butter or butterfat is pretty well bound to be the King Charles head of any parish-pump politics in Auckland. "Using rail transport, butter for loading into ships had to be ordered the previous day. With motor trucks, it could be sent as needed." One at once sees the Chief Purser of the Oronsay, for instance, sitting at his wicket returning antique jewellery to one departing matron, advising another on how best to keep out of boiling mud pools at Rotorua, gently repelling a young artist anxious to hang his abstracts on the wall of the Orchid Lounge for the attention of Australian squatters fat with wool cheques, and still having time to say over his shoulder to a hovering minion, "Order another half dozen trucks of butter, Wotherspoon, I forgot 'em last night."

Tearing ourselves reluctantly away from butter, however, let's to our mutons. In one of those fustian, judicial, apparently factual leaders we have

"One of the few gracious and still lovely remnants of a spoilt city"

come to expect from the *Herald*, pleading very properly and grand-maternally for co-operation instead of civil war among the little ones, we read: "The Auckland Harbour Board has the urgent task of extending berthing facilities, and the Railway Department has a duty to provide rail access to new wharves and any exchange sidings that may be necessary to enable enlarged port facilities to be operated efficiently. But it is equally the duty of the City Council to protect Judges Bay, which is not only a reserve steeped in Auckland's early history, but also a restful retreat of trees, green sward and still waters within a mile or so of a large city's busy heart." Shaking off the clichés as a dog shakes off fleas, I still can't find a word to disagree with, in the above: them's me sentiments.

But we have learnt, in many an Auckland squabble, to mistrust most deeply any such cheering announcement, whether fully or semi-official. They generally mean that the mouth is uttering platitudes while the mind is busy with ways of selling the pass while the public sleeps. If—and it's such a big IF that my poor little portable can't compass it—IF one of our local news magnates were prepared to open a fund for the preservation of Judges Bay, as is done for the relief of oppressed European minorities, then we might get somewhere. But that is unlikely. Beauty, in cash-mad Auckland, has long ago lost her poor little fight, and now stands all purple and goose-pimpled in her bathing togs, while the public streams elsewhere. I'd as soon expect to see snowploughs churning up six-foot snowdrifts in Queen Street as to observe the people of this once lovely city doing anything really generous, practical and far-sighted to preserve for themselves, and their children, our few remaining beauties.

—Sarah Campion

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carried quite literally golden and glittering fleeces and were as rare as the dodo or the phoenix. Decidedly you have chosen an exciting profession.

It has only one drawback. Life's brief span is all too short to learn the business. I don't know Methusaleh's profession, but if he was a farmer he ought to have made a good one. He is the only mortal who has lived long enough to master the job thoroughly. You can learn a certain amount from books and lectures and professors; you can look over the boundary fence and see what your neighbour is doing; but your principal teacher will be your own farm. Every farm has its own secrets. It is only in the course of years that you will learn what your own is really like, what are its virtues and its idiosyncrasies. In the process of learning you must be blind to its faults and kind to its virtues. It is something to be regarded with tolerance and affection; you must have a boundless "will to please."

Above all, beware and shun the *petit bourgeois* outlook; a farm is something more than a till to delve into; a mere

means of livelihood. Dr Johnson, at the sale of Thrane's brewery, busked about with pen and inkhorn proclaiming that "we are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the possibility of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice." So, when you get your farm you are not merely acquiring so many acres of pasture or arable, but an opportunity of changing this particular corner of the earth into something rich and opulent, or of founding a rural dynasty and only incidentally a chance of making your fortune.

Not that you should neglect your banker or your accountant. "Ill fares the land, etc." where "wealth accumulates and men decay"; but how very much worse the fate of the country where the contrary holds good. Personally, I have no doubt that in the lapse of years you will change Hardacres into Lush Pastures. It will be a rewarding task; poor in pocket you may sometimes be, but poor in heart or poor in spirit, never.

I have said enough. It is time now for Polonius to retire behind the arras, there to await the well-merited fate of those who give advice.