



1951—A YEAR OF GOOD INTENTIONS

READERS may remember that at the beginning of 1951 we printed a collection of New Year Resolutions. Some of these pledges, we suspected, were not made in the appropriate mood of high seriousness: there were hints of levity, as if resolutions were thought to be mere holiday exercises or excursions. Throughout them could be traced the lamentable conviction that promises made to the self would not be kept, and could be little more than good intentions.

As the year came near to its end, therefore, we decided to ask our contributors what had happened. Had they succeeded or failed? It was, perhaps, an embarrassing question—especially for those who, we discovered, had completely forgotten their resolutions. Still, the answers came in. Some were announcements of success; a few were admissions of failure; and others, perhaps the majority, indicated both progress and backsliding. But the contributors must speak for themselves. Their resolutions are reprinted, and below them are the reports and comments.

I PROPOSE to do less work in the coming year than in the one past. This will not necessarily entail greater idleness, but unless I begin 1951 with some such precautionary resolution I may be led by circumstances into doing not less but more than in 1950.

TOWARDS the end of last year I expressed the intention of doing less work in 1951 than I did in 1950. You now ask whether I succeeded. Certainly I did. The carrying out of my resolution required nothing more than a sustained lack of resolution.

—R. M. Burdon

I RESOLVE, wearily, in 1951, not to listen to any episode of *Hester's Diary*, *The Devil's Duchess* or *Dad and Dave*, except the last, to any excerpts from *The Bartered Bride*, nor to any Quiz, Request or Sankey Singers' Session, to switch off all ZB announcers who make matey little jokes about other ZB announcers, and all plays about revenants, spivs, war-time Europe and seal-skin trousers, and to tolerate Danny Kaye and Jimmy Durante only on new recordings.

TO keep my vow I really tried, of stifling or evading soap-opera slabs, *The Bartered Bride*, old jokes and Hit-Parading, all plays of crime and suicide, and crooners' serenading. I found my set was still and dumb more often than it sounded; my seeking for perfection's sum by facts had been confounded, and

so to former ways I've come, by noise and corn surrounded. My opiate-sodden constitution abandons every resolution, believing, since it's I who make them, none has a better right to break them.

—J.C.R.

CRITICAL blinkers must be donned. We are "to encourage local talent." Not reasoning why, I shall listen, bolstered by insular pride. Fewer hours with Menuhin, alas! And Solomon! But if taste wins, I can sell the radio and buy records.

AN irksome resolution, but fairly conscientiously kept. It brought occasional pleasant surprises, but patriotism is not enough to bridge the gulf that lies between the performance of the gifted amateur and the dedicated professional. Insular artistic standards benefit neither the audience nor the artist who is pitting himself against the best recordings.

—Loquax

I RESOLVE to read no more Penguin detective stories, or if I do buy them (since the breaking of resolutions is half the pleasure of making them), to have the courage to be seen buying them.

I STILL preen myself on that unrelenting sense of purpose *The Listener* gives me credit for, first in suggesting that I should make New Year resolutions and second in appearing to believe that I might actually keep them. Alas! I did sneak into a shop recently and buy some Carter Dicksons. But my purity is still only slightly mottled—through simple lack of time, which alone saves me from my grosser self.

—David Hall

I CAN'T help thinking it would be a good idea if I could manage to return a few borrowed books, and answer some of the letters in the stack in front of me.

(1) **JONES** on *The Nightmare* has gone back. So has *The Naked and the Dead*. Cetera manent. On the whole, have succeeded reasonably well: operative word—"few."

(2) Many have answered themselves. Time, the great healer. Square-off: in the middle of the paper war it is possibly no bad thing to be a paper non-combatant.

—A. R. D. Fairburn

TO take such things as test cricket more calmly; prune my style and try to write some verse; read fewer detective stories; see more of my own country; relax and listen, maybe to radio, maybe to nothing; and culti-

vate my garden, including an asparagus bed in which so far hope has triumphed over experience.

REFRESHED by England's one Australian victory, I take test cricket more calmly. I have written verse and pruned my prose style; what compulsion more agreeable than this *Listener* invitation? Undiminished consumption of "detectives" is relaxation in the world's barrage. I have seen more of my country, including the strike boon of the Kaikouras by day. The few stalks from my asparagus bed—a promising adolescent—are sweeter than the bought.

—Alan Mulgan

DURING 1951 I propose to continue energetically my campaign against broadcasts and public performances of modern music in its more maniacal manifestations—i.e., as evinced by concoctions of discordant noises, pseudo-musicians masquerading as contemporary composers, among whom are many British examples and at least one New Zealander.

MY personal resolution, to continue protesting against the flood of bad, discordant "modern" music, which threatens destruction of our finest musical standards, has succeeded in so far as it has provoked amusingly vituperative recriminations from *Listener* correspondents whose angry blood I have drawn. On the other hand, strangely enough, it has not yet intimidated the NZBS. I shall persevere, however, undeterred by



knowledge of King Canute's marine rebuff, or by the story of the fat lady who ate dripping daily after reading that constant dripping wears away a stone.

—L. D. Austin

THE only New Year's resolution that I can possibly make is not to make a New Year's resolution. You see, I know myself too well. But there are a few things I would like to do resolutely throughout the year (and know I

won't). They are: Keep a diary; make notes of good ideas and not lose them immediately; start a filing system that works; not get too mad at those *Listener* readers who thought I was asking for "niceness" when I suggested that New Zealand short stories should picture the suburban scene more truthfully.

ON re-reading my last year's Resolution, it seems as though I shall have to explain why I haven't done the things I said I wouldn't be doing, anyway.

Diary.—I did start, getting triumphantly as far as January 5.

Notes of Good Ideas.—Never the pen, the paper and the idea together at once.

Filing System.—Not bad, but a bit rickety. The gas bill seems to gravitate to the folder marked "Film Notes"; the laundry bill to "ZB Book Reviews"; a nail file, and a book on the *Habits and Care of Budgerigars* turned up in the "Listener," and "Work in Progress" is jammed full of newspaper clippings which have not yet been pasted into scrap books.

As for the last, I suppose I have kept that one—but more from inertia and a congenital inability to keep on keeping "mad" at anything for long, than from any lowering of the colours. I still think I was right!

—Isobel Andrews

MY own personal resolution for 1951 is to take for my own the main items of the famous code of Robert Louis Stevenson—

To work a little harder and with determination and intelligence.

To remember enough of the past to profit by its mistakes.

To worry never, but to think seriously of the future, and not only of today.

To be cheerful and keep smiling.

To cultivate economy and to waste nothing of value.

BELIEVE it or not, I have kept all but ONE—the one about not worrying. I did not **ACHIEVE** this Goodness—it was **THRUST UPON ME**. For my Publishers demanded new Cook-book Copy immediately—so that disposed of Number One.

Long experience had already taught me to observe No. 2.

My ever-expanding daily Mail-bag has kept me cheerful; and the needs of CORSO, Darby and Joan Clubs, Red Cross, Unesco and so on have effectively controlled my attitude towards waste.

—Aunt Daisy

I RESOLVE to make my radio criticisms more constructive. It is an exquisite pleasure to demolish in a few well-chosen words a programme that has taken six sweating

(continued on next page)