

THE WICKED FLEA

I HAVE a friend whose first question to me when we meet, if it is not my first question to him, is, "How are they now?" "They" are not my dogs or my sheep or my cows or my rheumatics or my corns, but the fleas that have been tormenting me since the grass turned to dust ten weeks ago. We can still laugh about them,

APRIL 7 but the joke becomes thinner and thinner. To be put off one's balance by a flea is worse than losing temper and sleep because dogs bark, roosters crow, or beetles tick in the wall. It is the end of philosophy and a relapse into second childhood. But it is ten years at least since science told us confidently that flies, fleas, lice and bugs had all been sentenced to death. I remember the photographs with which we used to be fed from the Mediterranean—peasants grinning in a cloud of dust while health squads pumped the magic down their necks and under their loosened waistbands. Now even the flies buzz contemptuously. I have dipped my dogs, moved their kennels, sprayed the surrounding earth, smeared window sashes and sills, and almost saturated cushions, mats, mattresses, and overalls without annihilating either the flies or the fleas. If I have peace for 24 hours it is a great victory. But I know that if I work where the dogs used to be (two months ago) or even take too long hooking or unhooking their collars I will pay in half an hour for my clumsiness.

David, I seem to remember, asked Saul if he was looking for fleas when he entered the cave in which David robbed him of the tail of his shirt but let him go with his life. I thought of it recently when a farmer in whose car I was riding stopped on an uninhabited stretch of road, grabbed his own knee, and hobbled out behind the car to effect a capture. Fleas have tormented man since he first stood upright, and for a million or more years longer. Though they have never conquered him they have come near to conquest in the plague inoculations and other fiendish things done to him in the dark, and I can't help feeling resentment that the worst experience I have ever had of them myself has been in 1952—a decade after they should all have been dead.

I WAS wrong about the amity of our roosters. What I said was true when I said it, but it is miserably untrue today. I don't know whether too many liberties were taken, or whether they were taken in too impudent a manner; but Joe's charity has been used up. He is neither patient now nor kind. One reason perhaps is that he

APRIL 9 is moulting—tail-less and bedraggled, while his young rival struts about in his first glowing feathers and hackles. Another reason could be that Joe is a gentleman and his rival a lout. Joe eats last, and nearly always gives the best things away. Though he is no laggard in love,

by "SUNDOWNER"

he observes the codes of gallantry. His rival is a snatch-and-grab lad, eating and courting. If Joe is irritable, there is much to make him so. But I hope his impatience will not grow with what it feeds on. He still tolerates a common perch at night, and I find it a little amusing to listen to the crowing contest at daybreak. If that also gets under his skin I shall have to arrange alternate nights in solitary confinement.

I FORGOT to leave an egg for the hedgehog, and the next day it failed to appear. Today, however, I saw it again while I was feeding Elsie in the garden, and I could not help noticing that she not only saw it before I did but showed, for her, unusual interest in it. She started slightly when it first appeared, drawing my

APRIL 10 attention to it, and then followed it with her eyes till it disappeared before she resumed her grazing. I don't think she had any anxiety, or any hostility, but she gave it more attention than she would have given to a rabbit or a cat, and the reason perhaps was that she has not often seen a hedgehog by day.

DX NOTES

THESE notes are supplied by the New Zealand Radio DX League and are designed to record items of interest from overseas stations on both the broadcast and shortwave bands. Inquiries sent to *The Listener* regarding the identification of stations will be forwarded to the League for attention. Particulars of the type of programmes, approximate frequency, date and time heard, are necessary

THE New Zealand Radio DX League is trying to arrange for the short-wave station at Helsinki, Finland, to broadcast events at the Olympic Games in which New Zealanders will compete. It is hoped these events will be broadcast especially to this area. Radio Norway, Oslo, will broadcast highlights of the Games in English from 8.0 to 8.15 a.m., noon to 12.15, and 2.0 to 2.15 p.m. daily.

More Australian Stations

BAD news for DXers is the announcement by the Australian Postmaster-General that 17 new National stations will be erected in the Commonwealth. This means more interference with signals from stations in North America, which provide many loggings for most New Zealand DXers. Eight of the new stations will have high power. In addition, the power of 27 existing stations will be substantially increased. When the stations are built, nearly all Australian listeners will have a choice of two National programmes during peak evening listening hours. One new station will be a 200-watt experimental outlet, 3BN Bendigo. This will operate as a "booster," amplifying and rebroadcasting programmes from 3AR Melbourne. The Woomera rocket range in South Australia will have its own station, 5WM.



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I was interested in the hedgehog's return for another reason than that provided by Elsie and the eggs. I had just read a bulletin (*The Impact of Man Upon Nature in New Zealand*) written by Robert Cushman Murphy and reprinted from the Proceedings of the

into the air to kill it by dropping it. That would, however, be hard work, and since cars at once kill and crush and burst the carcass open, it is easier to be a scavenger than a hunter.

(To be continued)

Australian Jazz Band

AUSTRALIA'S best-known jazz band, Graeme Bell and his Australian Jazz Band, is currently giving concerts and studio broadcasts for the Australian Broadcasting Commission. The band, which plays in the Dixieland tradition, recently returned from its second overseas tour. It had been away for 18 months, and one of the highlights of the trip was an appearance at the Jazz Festival of Britain, where its leader was presented to the Queen, then Princess Elizabeth.

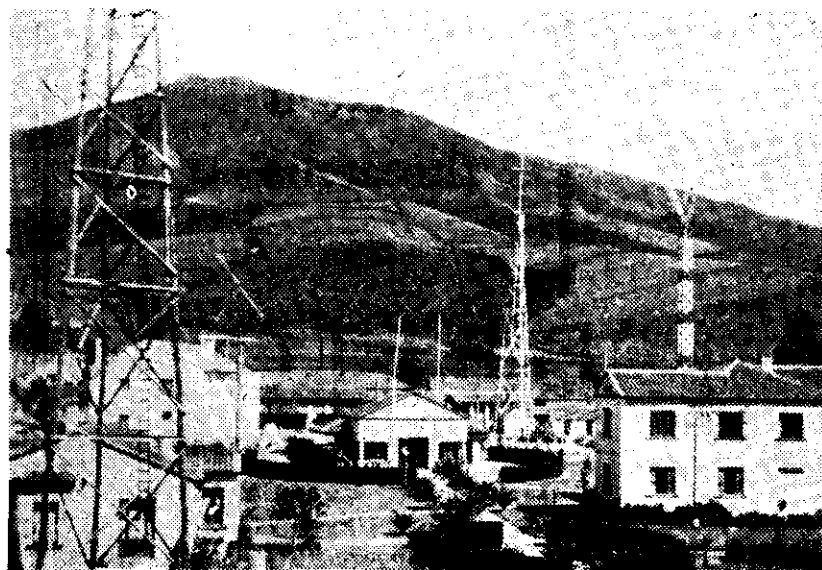
Around the World

Viet Nam: Radio France Asie, Saigon (formerly Radio Saigon), is broadcasting a programme to New Zealand on

15420 kilocycles (19-metre band) from 9.15 to 10.15 p.m. daily. Signals are good. News is broadcast at 10.0.

Guatemala: TGNA, P.O. Box 601, Guatemala City, is being well received on a new frequency of 11850 kcs (25-metre band) with English Gospel broadcasts from 3.0 to 3.30 p.m. TGNA is, like HCJB in Quito, Ecuador, a missionary broadcaster. When closing at 3.30 it makes an appeal to listeners to write to the station about reception.

Pakistan: Radio Pakistan, Karachi, is broadcasting a test programme to Britain from 8.15 to 9.0 a.m. daily on 6035 kcs (49-metre band) and 7010 kcs (41-metre band). Signals are good on both frequencies. Recorded music is broadcast.



STATION HCJB, Quito, Ecuador, showing the transmitter building (centre, rear), and the studio building (at right)