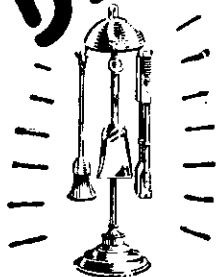


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Shepherd's Calendar

SHADOWS IN APRIL

by "SUNDOWNER"

I FOUND myself thinking of the Anzac missing this morning more than of the Anzac dead. The missing are, of course, dead, too, but we refuse, even after 38 years, to accept that fact. The imagination keeps returning to impossible possibilities and the heart sighing for miracles which the mind immediately sweeps away. I am not one of the parents condemned to these recurring tortures, but I know that if I were I would be clinging still to that hopeless hope. I would not believe, but I would never close the door on belief absolutely and forever. I would not be strong enough. Week after week, month after month, year after year, I would find myself surrendering to mocking deceptions which my will would never be ruthless enough to destroy.

APRIL 25 And if the miracle did happen who would be strong enough to accept it? What would the mother do, or the father, if a man of 60 walked in after 38 years and said, "I am your son"? What would the boy himself do when he saw his parents? Could emotion or reason bridge such a gap? One of the men not seen after the Gallipoli landing went to school with me. We were not only boys together; we grew up only a few miles apart, and only a few weeks separated us when we went into camp. I came out of camp without going overseas. He went and disappeared without trace; vanished during the landing and was never seen again or reported or clearly accounted for. What would I do if he walked in on me today—not the generous, open smiling boy I knew, and have so often seen since, but the ageing, anxious, stooped man with white hair, the sparkle gone from his eyes and the spring from his step, worried about his food or his family or his bronchitis or his bank balance, and remembering me only as a shadow from his vanished youth? That Gordon would disturb and frighten me. I think he would disturb his surviving brothers and sisters. The Gordon we knew has not grown old as we have grown old, or been slowed down by folly or care. He is forever young, and until we are born again, remains forever lost. It is vexing his ghost to go on calling him back.

THE difference between a Halfbred and a Romney is the difference between a donkey and a mule: both can tear your character to shreds; but one is twice as heavy as the other, and twice as strong, and defies your efforts to end the argument violently. If a Halfbred will not go through a race or into a dip she can be dragged or thrown; but when I try those methods with Romneys I am exhausted after the third sheep and a lunatic after the fourth. But I tried them again today. I was determined that every ewe I had would go through a foot-rot bath both ways: the alternative being to let them run out of the yards, bring them back, and then let them think they were escaping again. I knew better than to try to make them enter the yard through a trough, especially a new trough in an improvised race that they had not been through before. But the devil was in me: a dozen devils. Things had to be done my way, not the Romney way; in my time and not Romney time; for my reasons and not for theirs. I circled them round the entrance, I rushed them at it, I dragged them through it one by one, I twisted and cracked their heads till they all faced it—if it is facing a thing to have your nose pointing to it and your mind half a chain behind you. I up-ended one girl through, and holding her at the outlet,

called frantically on Tip to bring the others on. But the louder I yelled at him the less pressure Tip applied, and at last he thought it too dangerous to be within a chain of me. If I had given in then I would still have been a fool, but I would not have been so many brands of fool, such a wreck physically or such a tattered rag morally, as I was when I gave in an hour later with a third of the flock through the bath and the others breaking back up the hill with Tip too sour to stop them.

Doing the job the right way took me less than 20 minutes. Arranging my yards the right way would take an hour or two and the expenditure of five or six pounds. But I am not sure that I would be happy in a world governed wholly by reason. I was born into, grew up in, and would not now abandon the world of vanity, stubbornness, and unreason in which the difference between a child of seven and a child of 70 is that the second usually has white hair.

I THOUGHT it what the Americans call a mouthful when the North Canterbury Catchment Board told a landowner on Banks Peninsula last week that he could burn 200 acres of gorse if he would undertake to treat the regrowth with hormones within two years. First there was the landowner with all those acres of gorse and room still in his heart for hope. There was the confidence of the Board in science. There was its faith in human nature—its belief that the farmer could, and when the time came would, spray 200 acres with an expensive chemical. I hope I will live long enough to see those 200 acres free of gorse, the farmer using them profitably, the Board acknowledged as the pioneers of reform.

But if my own experience tells me anything, it is a hope that will not be realised. The Banks Peninsula patch of gorse is nearly 200 times as big as my own, and I have not quite succeeded in ten years in preventing my patch from spreading. I have certainly not spent much money on it, and I have made no attempt at all to conquer it chemically.

(continued on next page)

PRODIGY'S RETURN

ACCOMPANIED by his attractive English wife, Ruth Stanfield, the young New Zealand violinist Alan Loveday arrived the other day by air to begin a 10-weeks' tour of his native land. Interviewed at Wellington, he told *The Listener* he had cancelled a passage by sea when he learned it was necessary to rise at five in the morning in order to practise. That was too much, even for one whose talent and application have taken him to a position near the top in British music since he left New Zealand 13 years ago. In that time Alan Loveday has completed formal studies at the Royal College of Music and has fulfilled many important concert engagements. The musician who first performed on a small violin at the age of three, and on borrowed instruments during his years as a student, now plays a £3000 Stradivarius—his own.

The Strad, he told *The Listener*, was acquired about six months ago. It had belonged to a wealthy amateur, "who played it for about five minutes on Sundays." In New York, en route to New



ALAN LOVEDAY

Zealand, he was offered 13,000 dollars (about £4600) for the instrument, but refused to part with it.

Alan Loveday's rise to musical eminence began when he was still a student at the Royal College of Music. He performed with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at Sunday celebrity concerts at the People's Palace (a London concert hall) during the war, and later was

chosen to appear at the Albert Hall Promenade concerts. He suspects that the famous conductor Basil Cameron had something to do with this engagement after a session as guest conductor with the Royal College Orchestra. The young violinist has performed at the Proms each year since his first engagement.

Though he has not toured widely, the New Zealand tour is not Mr. Loveday's first. While still a student, he performed at Antwerp, and later appeared on concert platforms in Spain and in the Canary Islands. "Yes, there are two orchestras in the Canaries," he said "and although amateur they are very good." When he leaves New Zealand he will tour Australia, and he has been engaged for New York appearances on his way back to England.

During his stay in New Zealand Mr. Loveday hopes to show New Zealanders something of what he has accomplished during his years abroad, for it was New Zealand music-lovers who originally subscribed the money to allow him to study. Even to the unmusical he will be able to prove he has not wasted his time. His long hours with the violin have left him with the purely physical proofs of a permanently bent left elbow and slightly elongated fingers on the left hand.

N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 22, 1953.