

LOGIC IN THE BONES

I NEVER listen to the National Orchestra without thanking God that I am not the Minister of Broadcasting. I don't know what the deficit on the Orchestra is measured in money; and not being the Minister of Broadcasting I am not compelled to care. I know that the Orchestra is a necessity if working out the beast in man is a necessity in organised society. But how, if I were the Minister, could I prove that to my colleagues in Cabinet? How could I prove it to the public?

JULY 24 In the whole of New Zealand there may be a hundred thousand men and women musical enough to feel personal dismay if the Orchestra ceased to be. I don't think the number is as high as that, or nearly as high, but I'm sure that it is not higher. What argument could I use, if I were the Minister, to quell the doubts, questions, public protests and secret pressures of the other nineteen hundred thousand?

When I was hardly out of my teens I helped to collect money for a church. A teacher, not much older, went with me, but times were harder then than they are today, and the fund rose slowly. Then a farmer joined us, a big, rough, profane Scot who collected what was necessary in a week or two. His sole argument was that the district "must have a bloody kirk." He could not have said why, he never asked himself why, and when "the bloody kirk" was opened he never entered it. But he knew in his bones that a Scots community without a kirk lacked something essential. And I suspect that it is this bones logic, this partly instinctive, partly irrational, and partly imitative feeling that keeps most of us headed in the right direction in matters of culture. Without something like that to appeal to I can't imagine how any Minister of Education or Broadcasting can get approval for expenditures that it is impossible to explain aesthetically and justify economic-

ally. I can think of nothing else to strengthen the hand of a Minister of culture of any kind unless it is the fear of disappearing with the wrong kind of halo round his head—that, and a daily reading of the first seven verses of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.

MY latest number of *The Countryman* prints this story:

Old Thomas of Micklow still believes in the tricky monster, horns and all. "E 'arasses me terrible," he once confided to his daughter. She, who could by no means be called devout, replied in a well-meaning attempt to set her father's mind at rest, "You shouldn't let 'im worry you; 'e don't 'arass me." The old man's mouth opened a little wider than usual, as if to take in this amazing fact. Then the explanation dawned: "No; 'e've got you, me girl, an' them as 'e've got 'e don't 'arass."

It is a good story well told. But I have known it in one form or another for 60 years. I have referred earlier in this Calendar to a Swedish miner who succeeded in getting the Devil into his camp oven, but was not strong enough to hold down the lid. I was then six or seven. But the rest of the story, as I must have heard it then, and have no doubt heard it many times since, was something like this: "Why do you worry so much about the Devil, Mr. Thomson? He never troubles me."

"Why should he? He knows that he has you already."

The Somerset correspondent who sent the paragraph to *The Countryman* could not have heard the story himself on the Otago goldfields, or have passed it on from someone else who heard it. But I must now also surrender my belief that the Otago story was original. They must both be variations on a bright remark made far back in the old world and passed on at intervals with embellishments. All I can be sure about is that the first speaker is no farther

back in time than the Reformation, and probably no farther than Spurgeon or the Wesleys.

SHEEP get ticks, and dogs get fleas, and careless farmers get both. Conscientious farmers, however, get neither, unless they are ignorant, or unlucky when they are away from home. They know that extermination is better than control, and that it is possible. It was therefore humiliating to me to discover the other day that the few ticks I knew

JULY 26 my sheep had some weeks ago had suddenly become a host. Then last night, when I was sitting alone in front of the fire listening to Leeds, and had just bathed and shaved, I felt a sensation that I had not known since I was a boy working in a woolshed and careless about changing my clothes.

Fortunately, ticks in New Zealand are relatively clean. They inject a little poison—why I don't know, since it is not enough to anaesthetise the area and conceal from us what they are doing; or perhaps the "poison" is just uncleanness. But they don't leave dangerous disease germs behind as ticks do in some countries. In any case it is our own fault that we continue to be afflicted by them.

I don't know the full story, and until Jim put me right today I had believed that a tick was a ked, and a ked a tick, and that there was no difference between them but the spelling. Now I gather that a ked is not a tick at all, but a fly gone wrong. True ticks, I am told, are spiders, or as near to them as we are to monkeys, and have such a complicated life history that eradicating them, if they were once firmly established in New Zealand, would be like eradicating colds in the head. Keds, on the other hand, die in a few days if they get no blood to feed on, and as Dr. Hilgendorf pointed out 30 years ago, the cost of eliminating them altogether would be no more than we spend every two years on keeping them in check. It was a voice in the wilderness, as the voice of science so often is, but if it was the voice of truth we deserve all that is happening to us today, and a good deal more.

(To be continued)



SIR JACK HOBBS with (left) his famous opening partner, Herbert Sutcliffe. The latter is also one of those who pay tribute to Hobbs in the BBC programme

Portrait of a Great Cricketer

"YOU couldn't fault Hobbs," R. C. Robertson-Glasgow has written of the great English batsman. "In his time, 1905-1934, he met every sort of bowling on every sort of pitch; the baked, concrete-like surface of Australia, the lush grass of England, the matting of South Africa, the lightning bowling of a Jack Gregory, the leg-breaks and googlies of South Africa's Vogler, White and Faulkner, and of Australia's Hordern, Mailey and Grimmett. And he conquered them all."

Though some people may find it hard to think of Hobbs as a man of three score years and ten, he had his 70th birthday last December. Since then he has been knighted, but a few months before that the bearers of famous names in the cricket world honoured him in a different way. Last January in a programme specially recorded for the BBC Transcription Service they paid their tribute to him as cricketer and sportsman, and recalled the great days of matches in which he played for Surrey and England against Australia and South Africa. Those taking part in *Jack Hobbs: Portrait of a Great English Cricketer*, are A. E. Lawton, Sir Pelham Warner, Wilfred Rhodes, Andrew Sandham, P. G. H. Fender, A. E. R. Gilligan, R. C. Robertson-Glasgow, Herbert Sutcliffe, W. M. Woodfull, George Duckworth, Denis Compton, Neville Cardus, Sir Donald Bradman and Leary Constantine. Sir Jack Hobbs himself speaks at the close of the programme, and the narrator is the cricket commentator Rex Alston. This tribute to Sir Jack Hobbs is to be heard from all YA stations next week—from IYA on August 18 at 8.0 p.m., 2YA on August 20 at 8.15 p.m., 3YA on August 17 at 7.30 p.m., and 4YA on August 17 at 9.30 p.m.

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