



# 10 YEARS IN ENTERTAINMENT



## Presenting Music to Millions

### A Decade Has Passed Which Promises A Great Feast For The Future

(By Bolton Woods.)

**I**F radio had never happened, the last ten years would have witnessed no more amazing development than that provided by the gramophone, with its electrical recording of music and other entertainment. The gramophone record is the most potent factor in New Zealand broadcasting to-day, and will remain so for many a long day until the inventive genius of our talented technicians provides us with more breath-taking inventions by which to bridge further distance and dispel interference.

The whole history of these allies for the public weal—radio and the gramophone—is absorbingly interesting. It is a theme for endless personal discussions and a topic which journalists, authors and critics find inexhaustive.

It is a far cry to the days of Edison's recording on a tin-foil-covered cylinder the first verse of "Mary Had a Little Lamb," a feat so fraught with possibilities. Like many of the stories of the early days of the talking machine, the one of Edison's first success is a thrill, but the story of an intelligent fox-terrier that made a hobby of listening to one of the earliest phonographs equals it in human interest.

Within the pages of Mr. T. Lindsay Buick's book, "The Romance of the Gramophone," the story of Nipper is set forth in vivid detail and lively style. The story will bear re-telling, and, briefly summarised, is as follows:—

Francis Barraud (1856-1924), fourth son of Henry Barraud, the celebrated animal painter, inherited from his brother, also an artist, a bright fox-terrier named Nipper. The artist, Mr. Buick tells us, was an early addict to the phonograph, and as he played his instrument, Nipper, all ears and with longing eyes looking down into the horn, would sit listening to what he presumed to be his master's voice. Mr. Barraud conceived the idea of painting Nipper in this characteristic attitude. The picture finished, it was some little time before the artist and the most interested of all parties, the Gramophone Company, came together and began that happy connection which was severed only by the death of Mr. Barraud.

After certain alterations, the picture was purchased by the company, and, with the possible exception of the renowned "Bubbles," by Millais, it became the most famous artistic advertisement in the whole world.

New Zealand has a special interest in this picture, because its creator was the nephew of one of the pioneers of this country, the late Mr. C. D. Barraud, also an artist, whose paintings of New Zealand scenery are now among the most

highly valued of our early art treasures. The uncle arrived in Wellington by the *Pilgrim* in 1849. The nephew was treated generously by his patrons and enjoyed a substantial annuity up to the time of his death. Art, plus an idea, produced a result that is indeed one of the romances of modern commerce and industry. Nipper died a few years after his now famed portrait was made in 1899, and was buried in the garden of the studio where he spent so many happy days.

Radio, too, has had its romances, and when its history comes to be set down posterity will find it engrossing reading. But radio at the moment is giving musicians "furiously to think," and many hitherto accepted and cherished ideas are going by the board. If musicians are finding it more than

ever necessary to measure up to the relentless demands of the microphone and are being compelled to give listeners ever increasingly efficient performances, listeners on the other hand are getting something they never had before—a closer approximation to the real aims of the composer, which is, in the long run, what is the most important.

All the old tricks of the concert hall are of no avail in broadcasting—so-called "personality" in conductors and artists is lost over

the air; the musical sophistry of our virtuosi fails to impose itself on a radio audience, or rather that multiplicity of audiences of anything from one to ten persons. Radio may be destined to become the musicians' Eldorado, but at the moment, in New Zealand and in similar communities remote from the big centres of art, the mainstay of the programme builders is records. These "discs of frozen music," as they have been graphically called, have in themselves been improved out of all recognition within the past decade.

Given a modern recording at the one end and a reasonably efficient receiving set at the other, the radio listener obtains a result rarely possible of achievement in any other way. Not music alone, but plays are being broadcast to-day, that, a few years ago, would have made the mouths of lovers of the drama water.

On a certain Sunday evening, in 1933, radio history was made in New Zealand when 2YA broadcast a B.B.C. recorded play, "Christopher Wren." The impression created throughout the whole Dominion was a profound one, and it augured well for the future of radio-entertainment in these islands. Is it any wonder, then, that in the country we have to-day anything up to half a million amateur critics?

Listeners, whether they are (Continued on page 24.)



**NIPPER CLIMBS TO FAME.**—No other dog has ever been so much in the public eye as this subject of Francis Barraud's famous painting, eventually adopted as the trade-mark of "His Master's Voice" products for music-lovers.