

This Week's Special Article

Kipnis Separated The Sheep From The Bleats

FOR years New Zealanders have listened with good-humoured complacency to strangers telling them that theirs is a land without culture or deep thinking. For years they have smilingly agreed and brought out their answer, pat: "What can you expect in a country like ours—small, sparsely populated, far from the world's centres of thought and education?"

Then, for years, with a hint of self-pity, they have murmured: "You see, nobody comes to teach us. Our finest brains leave us to seek opportunity overseas. Musical or dramatic artists who come here are past their prime, never put on their best performances for us. How can we rival the Old World in culture?"

It all used to seem to me so very much a vicious circle. I was sorry for the poor New Zealanders who longed to be uplifted and could find no one strong enough to raise them. I realised their desire was genuine, their need real. I railed against the fate that set them so far from possible hope of salvation. I wept and gnashed my teeth with them, praying for the cultural experiences that were denied us by mere distance.

But that pity and that anger are dead now. For the first time I see my own countrypeople for what they are—a people of Rugby enthusiasms and comfortable ways, who like their culture fed to them

IN this outspoken article by a music-loving contributor, O. H. Murfield, the question is asked, why New Zealand audiences for Alexander Kipnis have not filled the city Town Halls. The answer may not be flattering, but at least it is provocative.

from a spoon like emulsion, but who will have none of it if the taste is bitter or the bottle stands on a high shelf.

Alexander Kipnis is the man who has, for me, separated the sheep from the bleats . . .

This Russian basso, who has been touring the Dominion for the NBS, is not perhaps as great an artist as the "Record" critic, "Scherzo," would have us suppose. But this at least is certain: he is in the top flight of artist-visitors to New Zealand. A better basso, Chaliapin, was here once, long ago, but Chaliapin was an old and tired man then. Alexander Kipnis is practically the only singer of world class that has visited New Zealand at the very height of his power. He is the only artist who has come on a New Zealand stage with every sign of enjoying his art and the effort of giving it the best that is in him—no matter whether his audience be in Covent Garden or the Wellington Town Hall.

And yet this distinguished singer has been heard in three main centres—Auckland is yet to come—by half-size audiences. Why?

The reason, for once, cannot be sought in lack of money. The NBS prices have been phenomenal in the history of high-grade entertainment in New Zealand. The cost of two picture shows—less than the cost of a ring seat at a wrestling match—would have given anyone the chance to hear Kipnis. Why did so few take the chance?

(Continued on opposite page.)

In the Wake of the Week's Broadcasts

Radio talks in New Zealand are considerably different, it seems, from radio talks in Australia. Station 2SM, Sydney, has taken up Michael Hutt, who sailed away with another 12B personality, Colin Moore.

NEW ZEALAND TALKS ARE DIFFERENT

on board Count Felix von Luckner's yacht "See Teufel." On Sunday nights at 11.30 (New Zealand time), Michael Hutt broadcasts a sponsored half-hour. Last week he told of several of his adventures in many parts of the world with a rare turn of wit and skill. Of course, New Zealand listeners scarcely knew Michael Hutt for the man he really was. Sydney gives him a remarkable opportunity, for he talks

openly and with relish of the gaols he has been in, the laws he has broken, and other things most people want to do at times, but are scared to try.

In a syncopated frame of mind, with breakfast undigested inside me, I have just enough strength left to protest once more against the "Brighter Breakfast" broadcasts of the NBS.

THIS BRIGHTNESS IN THE EARLY MORN

Inside me the egg is still jazzing joyously on its strip of bacon, and the porridge is not at rest. The old days, when breakfast used to lie pleasantly, soothed to satisfaction by the "Merry Widow" waltz or some other gentle tune, are gone, alas, forever!

Lives of women seem never-ending subjects of radio talks. 4YO is handling now "Lives of Famous Women," starting the ball rolling with Cleopatra, who simply cannot be ignored (it seems), when famous women are discussed. I am not going to count up the number of times

FAMILIARITY BRINGS PEEVISHNESS

I have heard something about Cleopatra on the air, nor am I going to point out the number of discrepancies I have observed between the references. My argument is simply that there are hundreds of subjects which have never even been touched upon as radio material, either in the form of addresses, playlets, or any other pre-