

PROGRESS AND THE POET

Radio Man Who Turns His Back On The Present For The Riches Of The Past

POETS have always rebelled against things as they are all through history. One of their duties is to puncture the self-satisfaction of their fellows. In this instance Darcy Cresswell, New Zealand poet well known to radio listeners for his readings in Auckland and Wellington, has some acute comments to make before he leaves for England.

WE are all so sure we are right these days about everything that it comes as a world-shattering shock to be told we are all wrong.

English-speaking people, and especially New Zealanders, are quite agreed that democracy is right and Fascism is wrong. Germans and Italians are equally sure that Fascism is right and democracy is wrong.

We can bear that. The English and the New Zealanders are so positive they are right that they can put up with the Fascists thinking they are right.

BUT what if they are both wrong, if neither democracy and Fascism is allowed to be right? If our whole civilisation is wrong . . . if our entire philosophy of life is based on false premises of reason?

What if the earth doesn't go round the sun? What if one and one don't make two, but only appear to make two? What if we had a sixth sense added to our other five that would show us that one and one don't really make two?

MENTAL chaos!

The sort of dark and dismal chaos in which Carlyle would have revelled.

Yet Einstein has pointed to horizons of thought just like this. Einstein says it is not true that two parallel straight lines will never meet. And when the atom has been split, particles have been known to move from one place to another without any interval of time elapsing between the moment they left one place until the moment they arrived at another.

IT was this sort of mental disturbance that I had when I talked with Mr. Darcy Cresswell, New Zealand poet, in Wellington last week. He is well-known to radio listeners for his readings over the air from 1YA. And poets, like scientists, go straight to fundamentals.

Mr. Cresswell believes that civilisation rests on false premises. It depends on reason, he says, it leaves the senses out of account. Machines and the machine age are the logical development of reason. He sees no hope for a civilisation based on reason, that leaves the senses out of account. He expects it to crash.

The materialism of the present day will be replaced with a civilisation on a spiritual basis. The poets will be its priests.



S. P. Andrew, photo.

DARCY CRESSWELL.

... "The cinema and the newspapers and radio are the enemies of art."

THOUGH he talks over the air he is no advocate of radio. "I think the cinema and the newspapers—not even excepting the 'Radio Record'—and the radio, are the enemies of art," he says, "but we have men in the broadcasting service in New Zealand who are doing a lot against odds to give broadcasting a cultural value.

"Let us hope they will," he said, "because the broadcasting of perfectly drivelling music, like sensational journalism and silly sensational films, lowers the taste of the public."

THERE are two sides to art, he says: the creative and the appreciative. The creative side can never be eradicated, no matter how hard people might try.

"It is as stubborn as ragwort or blackberry. You can't kill it with a grubber or a plough—though this has been tried in New Zealand.

How? In this way: New Zealand tries to make its artists be farmers or do something useful."

But on the side of appreciation, thinks Mr. Cresswell, the public can be misled. And they are being misled, he says, by the sort of entertainment and instruction that they get in the newspapers and the cinemas and too often over the air.

HE made these remarks from the depths of an armchair in Wellington. When I asked him if he would elaborate them, he said he preferred to give them like that.

"Half the charm of saying this," he said, "is to fling the words over your shoulder as you go."

SOME time ago he published "Poet's Progress," an autobiography, in London, and he takes the second part of his work to London with him in (Continued on page 50.)

Interview For "The Record"

By

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