

Of Success and Happiness

OF doctors it has been said they do not take their own medicine. Mrs. Albert Russell's talk on "The Principles of Success in Everyday Life" left me with the thought that, as a pragmatic psychologist, she might fittingly have made more practical application of the principles of psychology in "putting her message across." With the general tenor of what she is hoping to achieve by these talks I have no manner of complaint; but I strongly believe she would increase their efficiency tremendously by a slightly different presentation. If there is one thing more than another which the average human being hates, it is being preached at; good advice is the worst possible kind of advice, unless very skilfully administered, just as that little boy takes his pill more easily who absorbs with it the tastiest kind of jam. Her very title made me nervous: "The Principles of Success in Everyday Life." Would she not have intrigued her listeners better if she had asked "Is it Possible to Succeed and be Happy?" And on that peg have chatted brightly? Then her talk lacked illustration, the power of example. There was no break in her steady exposition of high principles, no little quip, no small illustration, no good or even bad example by which to profit. Albert, you let your wife down! And you, who know so well the value of a joke!

With Mrs. Russell's teaching I agree heartily. Financial and material success is not sufficient, she says, without happiness achieved by the fullness of intellectual and spiritual life. But why not have cited a case or two? Miss Hatty Green, in her day the world's richest woman, won by persistent shrewdness and greed served by financial genius: was she happy? Then those other poor souls mentioned in the cables recently. Two maiden ladies with forty millions: forbidden marriage by their father to hoard the family wealth. Where is the success of lives with never a man about the house, or a baby on the porch—starved in the happy field of domesticity?

"A man's power to achieve increases in the same ratio as his belief in that power increases"; "Whatever is held in the mind must eventually come forth"; "No one limits you but yourself"; "You can overcome heredity, environment and every obstacle if you so will"—these are familiar texts, but to their expression Mrs. Russell brought vigour, clarity, enthusiasm, and perhaps a trifle too much of melodrama and soothing syrup in her voice. While agreeing that he is happiest who finds play in his work, I distrust her advice to change that work forthwith to find the proper balance of playfulness. Not in these days. But I endorse and commend her statement that the capacity for success lies in us all. Within the measure of the talents given us we can all achieve success: it is not limited to the few. A more intriguing title, so as not to frighten the timid; a few examples to point the moral; a little lightness to gild the pill; and this series of talks would be increasingly effective in achieving success. In conception they are admirable, and in execution of a good standard—but one that might be bettered.

The VOICE of MICHAEL By "CRITIC"

To Bed or To Dance?

EXPECTING acidity and the healthy tang of lemons, I was given on Thursday the somnolent quiet of a flock mattress—evidently a last-minute change in the excellent series of industrial talks



TE ARATAUA PITAMA.
A noted Maori lecturer, whose address, "My People," from 3YA last week was both enjoyable and instructive.

from 1YA. But I was not thrilled. The gentleman was a little heavy, and his subject evidently not too conducive to gaiety. I do not dispute the importance of beds, for do we not spend from a quarter to a third of our lives there? Further, the majority of mankind dies in bed; so that from first to last the bed is fundamental to modern civilisation. But really the humble mattress is one of those things we do take for granted. That the provision of our beds constitutes a flourishing local industry pleases me, and I sincerely hope, in the national interests as well as in those of the bed-makers, that there will be a steady maintenance of this essential home industry.

FOR cheer I turned to 2YA to listen to Miss Inez Connop discourse on American ball-room dancing. Here was vigour and vitality, a woman who knew her subject, of good voice and incisive speech. I listened to her every remaining word with pleasure and interest regretting what I had missed. I heard

her effective description of the night club life and night clubs of American cities, and thank her in advance for the tips given. A mystic Indian cup-reader has predicted my departure shortly for the States, so I shall be able to check up! I have already bought an extra boiled shirt, and am having the necessary structural alterations made in my unmentionables to accommodate the inevitable flask. Pleased to hear that on the ballroom floor Britain rules the waves: rhythm, bearing, demeanour, all perfect, to carry off all world championships and seek vainly for fresh worlds to conquer. For the expert dancer I entertain the most profound jealousy—green-eyed and rabid. I would love to be a striking figure on the ball-room floor; but how vain an ambition! Still, in the mental picture she gave me of beauty and rhythm, of poetry and vitality. Miss Connop afforded me a little thrill, for which I thank her.

"Books of the Month"

MR. WILTSHIRE, in his talk on books, given from 3YA on Monday evening, proved most salutary, for it was only last week that I appended to my notes a pat on the back to speakers in general, and, in a misguided moment, allowed myself a place in their reflected glory. It was foolish and presumptuous, and Monday evening's speaker reminded me quietly, but forcibly, of several of those old saws to the tune of "Pride goes before a fall," until, more in sorrow than in anger, I dejectedly cut the speaker off in search of something a little less trying. He reviewed, quite tonelessly and equally dispassionately, three or four books which he assured us will suit the taste of the "ladies." If men are men, why are women ladies? The speaker's English requires careful watching; his enunciation is weak and unfinished, and the delivery is unimpressive.

"Books Grave and Gay"

SEARCHING the air for further talks, I was fortunate enough to chance on Mr. H. C. South, giving a lecture on "Books Grave and Gay," from 2YA. This, to a great degree, restored both my equanimity and faith in speakers. First, however, did I or did I not hear ardent instrumentalists tuning up in preparation for their appearance before the microphone? This is a nuisance which must be checked. No one has the least quarrel with plenty of practice, but

it would seem to be the essence of bad manners thus to overshadow another artist. Mr. South possesses an admirable radio voice and the arrangement of the subject matter of his talk was excellent. He began with an interesting review of a book by V. H. L. Serle, M.Sc., entitled "Everyday Marvels of Science." The man in the street must not be put off by this somewhat awesome title, for I am satisfied by what I heard that there is much of intense interest to all of us in this work. Briefly the book describes what has been accomplished in the world of science and invention during the last thirty years insofar as it affects the comfort and well-being of the average layman.

As the speaker said most aptly, "From the time when flying was merely a picturesque method of courting disaster, to the time when a young lady successfully flew a second-hand machine from England to Australia in three weeks," is roughly the period covered. In addition, the following received honourable mention: "Susan Spray," by Sheila K. Smith, whose latest book again has its setting on the borders of her beloved county of Sussex; "Seen Unknown," by Naomi Jacob, in which the writer once more cleverly portrays Jewish life and character; "Into the Land of Nod," by H. A. Vachell, wherein the writer delves into the question of heredity, and which sounds interesting, and cannot fail to be worth while in view of its authorship; and last, but certainly not least, for those who like their books full of action, Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Tarzan and the Lost Empire."

Almost by way of postscript, as it were, Mr. South quoted some excerpts from "The Book of Howlers," by H. Cecil Hunt. If the samples given are typical, there should be many laughs and chuckles hidden away between the covers of this book.

Farmer Brown and Fertilisers

FROM 3YA on Wednesday I heard Messrs R. B. Tennant and L. W. McCaskill in an interesting discussion. This talk was relayed from Dunedin. While I am compelled to criticise the delivery of both gentlemen, still I have no fault to find with the general idea, nor with the quality of the actual matter. Mr. McCaskill took the part of Farmer Brown, who is in doubt about the correct use of lime and various artificial fertilisers. He approaches a fields instructor (impersonated by Mr. Tennant) from the Department of Agriculture. Evidently the two are close personal friends, otherwise I can hardly imagine an independent, full-blooded New Zealand farmer remaining calm and unperturbed beneath the waves of sarcasm and raillery poured over him by a Government official appointed to assist in agricultural conundrums. Nor can I imagine a Government official opening the discussion with an invitation to partake of refreshment from his bag. Mr. Tennant overdid the slow, heavy and paternal manner. Had I been a farmer, however ignorant, in search of information, I should have taken strong exception to the very obvious air of patronage on the part of my tutor. This leads me to my criticism of Mr. McCaskill in the farmer's part. He seemed to be altogether too meek and mild to