

Another Court-Martial

ONCE again have I brought coals of fire upon my head! My lack of appreciation of the rendering of some old English songs and my confession that 'most singing is anathema to me' has both pained and grieved a correspondent from Dunedin. He asks why time should be wasted in writing upon a subject about which I know nothing and toward which I am accused of showing decided antipathy. Because my self-confessed lack of knowledge on things musical should be improved by these musical reviews and recitals; if every listener knew as much about the subject as our honorary, and very capable, instructors, few would waste time in listening, for they could be taught nothing. I should be counted as among the condemned—a brand to be plucked from the burning of musical ignorance—and my comments upon these musical talks should be treated as a confidential progress report upon the conversion which is proceeding!

The VOICE of MICHAEL By "CRITIC"

It is not beyond the realms of possibility that there are other listeners likewise thirsting for knowledge—and getting it from some of the most capable lectures to which I have had the pleasure of listening. This brings me to the second accusation, that of showing a decided antipathy to the subject.

Since April 24 I have written notes on six musical talks. In three I have acknowledged great indebtedness to the speakers for most valuable talks. Two others have respectively been classified as "one of the most interesting lectures of the week," and "very interesting." The sixth comment is the one causing the

ingly, as a dog-lover and, on behalf of all dog-lovers, I tender grateful thanks to "Sparwood," of the "New Zealand Referee," for his talk from LYA last Tuesday. May I also congratulate him on the possession of a splendid radio voice?

He gave some illuminating information on a breed about which little is generally known. Most of us know a little about the proud and lion-hearted Pekinese, but I should imagine that few of us realise the comparatively short time in which the breed has been seen outside the palaces of the Chinese Emperors.

In 1860, when a French and British expedition conducted a punitive campaign in China, Europeans for the first time saw the Pekinese. On this occasion five dogs were found in a palace which had been sacked and English naval officers were fortunate enough to gain possession of them all. One was given to Queen Victoria, and lived for many years at Windsor; the other four founded the Goodwood strain of Pekinese, into which new blood was introduced until 1896, when a Mr. Douglas Murray successfully smuggled two more of the jealously guarded breed from China. These were promptly introduced into the now famous Goodwood strain, and to-day the breed is, generally speaking, well-known in Europe.

"Your master says you're handsome, I agree,

But, all the same, you don't appeal to me. Something too much of cynical surmise Lurks in the glitter of those Eastern eyes. Aloof and calm, you pierce me through and through;

"I'm not acquainted, stranger man, with you."

I am tempted to quote again from the same delightful little book of Joe Walker's:—

"Evening in Heaven. On His star-lit throne.

God sat in silence, sorrowful, alone. Up from the earth, stabbing the peaceful air,

Arose harsh cries of strife and wild despair.

The angels had withdrawn; what could they say

Or do to drive their Master's grief away?

Then to the seat crept one, and licked His hand;

"Your dog can't help—but, oh, I understand,

And am so sorry." On that shaggy head

God dropped a tear, and God was comforted."

Sometimes I think Walker must have had an Airedale at the back of his mind when he penned the above beautiful lines. The Airedale was another breed discussed by Mr. Sparwood. It is obvious that he, too, loves this type.

The origin is interesting. Sometime in 1850, either by accident or by design, the otter-hound and the wire-haired terrier were crossed. Otter hunting was very popular in Yorkshire in those days, and this cross having been effected in the valley of the Aire, the name Airedale is peculiarly appropriate.

Strange as it may seem to call a dog which may easily weigh forty or fifty pounds a terrier, still, as Mr. Sparwood states, it is perfectly correct to do so. At home in water and on land, tractable

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—Steffano Webb, photo.

present protest. To give unstinted praise for three lectures out of six; to give praise for two of the remaining three; and in the last to accept the fault for not enjoying the item as solely my own—surely this cannot be ascribed as "decided antipathy."

My correspondent (whom I also thank for correcting my error in attributing a couplet on singing to Shakespeare, instead of to William Byrd) has completed his letter with a Latin tag, which, by the way, did not seem very appropriate. I have not quite forgotten all my tags and, in much fear of one of my tenses, conclude with: *Quin dicant non est merito ut ne dicant id est.*

On Dogs

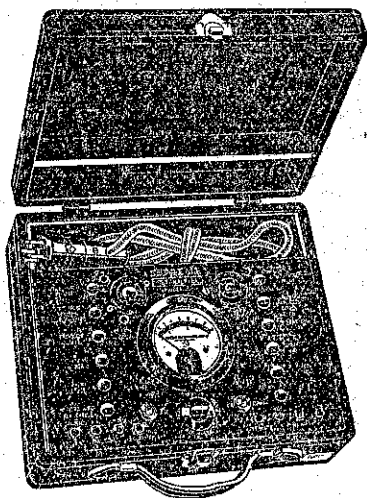
HERE is a subject about which I think I may claim some knowledge; as I look from my study window no fewer than three faithful canine friends come within my line of vision. Accord-

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