

The Story of the Garden

ILLUMINATING and somewhat startling information on the omnipotence of green leaves was provided by Mr. E. B. Wiltshire in the course of his dialogue with Mr. F. C. Fairclough given from 3YA on Monday.

I have heard it said that but for the benevolence of the sun's rays life on this planet would be non-existent, and have been something of a sun worshipper as a consequence, but I had not quite realised the debt of gratitude which we all owe to green leaves and plant life in general. We are informed that without them we must perish. We shall all regard our aspidestras with a new feeling of respectful affection hereafter.

The chemical action of green leaves is to take charge of all the loose carbon monoxide floating around, and to give off oxygen in exchange. The former gas, being deadly so far as we humans are concerned, and the latter being essential to our continued life, it follows that the exchange effected is of mutual satisfaction to both parties.

Nature's Food

EVER since I heard Mr. F. W. Saxton, F.C.S. give a talk on milk I have been puzzling whether I am glad or sorry that I had this talk in my schedule! Not that it was anything but pleasantly, indeed forcibly, told, but now when I help myself to the milk, I feel almost like an early Christian facing Nero.

It would appear that while milk is the most balanced and complete of our foods, containing proteins, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins and what not in the best possible proportions to suit human consumption, still, like most worldly things seemingly perfect, there is a catch in it. So far as milk is concerned there are quite several catches; a few million to the cubic centimetre, in fact. They rejoice in the name bacteria or, in common parlance, bugs. For ease and speed in multiplication, the honest bug will make Bvr Rabbit look as though he were not even a tryer. Each will multiply into two every half hour. If you want a headache, or have come recollection of geometrical progression (I think it is) you will see that twenty-four hours storage of a bug or two will provide you with enough bacteria to last you for all time.

I was comforted by learning that all these bacteria are not harmful. On the contrary, the majority are the very staunch allies of mankind, and comparatively few are disease producing. Disagreeable though sour milk may be, still it is by no means harmful; indeed it is beneficial. Sour milk is the handiwork of one of the more friendly variety of bacteria.

Many are the efforts made to render milk pure and germ proof. There are two very important helpers in these attempts. One is pasteurisation and the other is increased cleanliness. The former process (named after that great Frenchman Pasteur) consists of heating up the milk to a temperature of 60 to 75 degrees C., and maintaining this temperature for a period of some thirty minutes, afterwards rapidly cooling the product. An alternative and speedier

The VOICE of MICHAEL By "CRITIC"

method is to heat the milk to 90 degrees or so for one minute, and to cool in the usual way.

In theory this practice should put finis to the bugs; in practise the theory is found to be incomplete, and while bacteria are considerably reduced by pasteurisation they are by no means exterminated. The speaker pinned his faith



GLADYS WATKINS,
Wellington's noted carillonist. She is also an accomplished pianist, and with Nancie Holloway, violinist, will present a recital from 2YA on August 10.

to cleaner methods of production, clean cows, clean sheds, clean milkers, careful transportation; these are the ways to get milk pure and free from contamination. Meanwhile for as long as I remember the details of this talk I shall go on considering myself a hero each morning at breakfast.

Personal Observations

A POWERFUL talk was given from 3YA on Thursday when Dr. P. Stanley Foster spoke on the Rotary movement and its hopes and aspirations. Personal contact between influential men of various countries must inevitably lead to a better understanding and, if the movement continues to grow, should prove a valuable factor in the movement toward world peace.

Dr. Foster did well to remind us, as Britishers, that to other nations we are both foreigners and aliens, having habits and customs which are both strange and incomprehensible. Too often do we regard the people of other nations as "foreigners" on a plane decidedly lower than that occupied by ourselves. How impatient do we become because an honest beef steak is not easily procurable in Paris. But do we go out of our way to provide an equally honest dish of snails or frogs' legs for our own French visitors?

The geographical position of New Zealand makes international thought difficult. The best way of cultivating international thought is by travel; this is not possible for all, but good newspapers, the wireless, and other adjuncts of modern life all tend to break down international barriers and to permit a peep at other countries and other lives. Dr. Foster is himself very well travelled. Speaking of his impressions of the U.S.A., he analysed this vast country's complicated "make-up." Having regard to the tremendous mixture of races here represented, is it any wonder that America can compare equally well with the best and with the worst of the rest of the world. It is true that Americans cultivate an accent which jars and they have a sense of humour of the custard-pie order; nevertheless, they are among the most hospitable people in the world, and they can show us all points in the fields of both sport and business.

Dr. Foster's experiences in France were as happy as in the U.S.A. He found the French people with whom he came in contact hospitable, sympathetic, and responsive. In view of the common report that the French are openly hostile to Britishers, it is pleasing to record that the speaker received many letters from France expressing sympathy and personal anxiety when the news of the disastrous Hawke's Bay earthquake became generally known.

As Dr. Foster concluded, personal contact is worth all the reading in the world. Greater and closer contact of individuals would do much to nullify the evil and dangerous propaganda of some of the world's popular newspapers. This in turn would turn to nought the machinations of international financiers, gamblers and seekers of power; in fact one can almost foresee the time when the dirty little money-grubbers, who thrive on, and hunger for, the carnage of war, would have to provide such a war entirely by and between themselves. Then, indeed, might we truly believe in "Peace on Earth, Goodwill towards Men."

In the Open

I FEAR I did not find in Mr. Ritchie's talk given from 4YA quite the enthralling entertainment for which I was hoping. The speaker's delivery was a trifle too slow, and I think perhaps listeners would have been better pleased had the talk been livened up with more incidents.

To my mind much of the descriptive matter was reminiscent of a very well written, but somewhat ornate, guide book. As an ardent supporter of the tramping fraternity I am always anxious that new disciples shall be won. I believe Mr. Ritchie would have been more effective if he had conducted his listeners on a jolly good week-end tramp. Let them stop once or twice to boil the billy; let them taste for once, real honest tea; let them see just how much they miss by sticking to the dusty hard roads in their noisome motor-cars, and I am sure quite a number will leave their cars in the garage next week-end and see what the trampers' point of view is like.

Much of the descriptive work in this talk was excellently well done; just a trifle too much of it, that was all.

Some Common Birds

OUR feathered friends must have a very staunch friend in Mr. R. A. Falla, M.A., who spoke on Friday from 1YA. I am quite certain that all Mr. Falla's listeners will have a quickened interest in the welfare of the birds after hearing his very able talk on that topic.

Mr. Falla made early reference to the alertness, activity, and general air of spruceness noticeable in all birds.

Come to think of it, the times when we catch a bird looking listless or with a morning-after-the-night-before air about it, are few and far between. Always do they seem full of vim and vigorous activity. The fact that their blood is perpetually at a temperature of from 104 to 114 degrees F. may have a lot to do with it. We get a bit restless when ours goes over 99 degrees; in fact I have an uncle who becomes agitated when he thinks that his is over 98 degrees; birds, however, seemingly everlastingly on the boil, thrive easily.

A close study of their habits has given Mr. Falla illuminating data. For instance young birds, during the first ten days of their existence, must consume their own weight in food every twenty-four hours. As they live almost entirely upon insects during that time, the parent birds are kept pretty busy, and once again does Nature provide an even balance in that the voracious appetites of the young birds cause a heavy toll to be taken in insect life just at the time when these insects are multiplying at an excessive rate.

Mr. Falla concluded a most entertaining lecture by giving an imitation of the various calls and songs of some of the better known birds. I think the speaker expressed doubt as to whether such would go over the air at all correctly; let me assure him that they were quite excellent. Particularly clever did I consider the plaintive notes of the little Grey Warbler. I hope to hear more on the same topic from this able lecturer.