

A Book Review

In his last review, Mr. H. C. South, speaking from 2YA, devoted most of the limited time at his disposal to a commentary on "The Mystery of the Moa," by T. Lindsay Buick.

The Moa, which belongs to the family tree of the Ostrich, Emu, Cassowary and Kiwi, provides us with the most baffling mystery and romance of all creatures. The pressing problem for those interested is to know just when the Moa disappeared. Skeletons afford but little aid; all that can safely be deduced from bones is that the Moa was in existence to a later date in the South Island than in the North. Maori lore and tradition, which are generally reasonably accurate, vaguely pin the date of the Moa extinction to between 1470 and 1770.

The book sounds attractive; it is historical rather than scientific and, according to Mr. South, deals very attractively with a definite chapter in the history of the development and evolution of life.

Brief mention was also made of two other books. "Buttercups and Daisies," by Compton McKenzie, is of particular interest because it provides an entire change from the author's customary heavy style. In this book we find an entire absence of the lugubrious, for which is substituted cheerful humour.

Mrs. Burnett Smith (Annie S. Swan) has taken a passage from the Lambeth Conference report "Youth . . . struck its tents and is on the march . . ." as the theme of her latest book "The Marching Feet." Mr. South recommends this as a good book, strongly told and wise in its outlook. As he says, this authoress may be one of our oldest living novelists, but she remains very young at heart.

May I congratulate Mr. South on his reviews? They are extremely valuable because he always gives listeners full reasons why books appeal to him. In other words his criticisms, if they may so be termed, are constructive and never destructive, and consequently must be valued by those deciding on an addition to their library or to their reading list.

The New Defence Scheme

CHANGING upon a talk on the above subject from 3YA, I was quite astonished to learn at its close that I had been listening to a full-blooded colonel! Somehow I always associate the speech of colonels with barks, roars and clipped staccato-like utterances reminiscent of the noises of a full-grown barrage; the kind of speech which may bore you but will never lull you to sleep, that will compel your attention without arresting your interest.

The talk by Colonel S. V. P. Nichols, D.S.O., compelled attention and interested you; it was a smooth, logical exposition of the desirability of the new volunteer defence scheme. He illustrated to a nicety the suggestion which I have more than once made in these columns that the quoting of an incident or the telling of a story will compel more attention than all the prosy, logical arguments in existence.

Early in his talk the Colonel reminded me that prior to 1870 the French invented

The VOICE of MICHAEL By "CRITIC"

the machine gun. The secret was so closely guarded that when the French armies took the field against the Germans, none knew how to operate the weapons which, theoretically, should have won any war of the period. Lack of knowledge and training cost the French the wars of 1870. The application of this illustration was excellent; it compelled attention, and listeners would have no difficulty in applying the lesson to present day conditions. The pressing need on the outbreak of any war is for trained and capable officers and N.C.O.'s. The volunteer system in New Zealand should provide enough material to call upon in case of emergency—material which may be spared the usual necessity of gaining fighting experience at the cost of its life.

The Alsatian

HAS any gentleman been more maligned, abused and slandered than the handsome Alsatian? Realising that in "Sparwood," of the "N.Z. Referee," I was listening to an expert, I held my

breath in apprehension when he announced recently from 1YA that he was to talk on Alsations. But my anxiety was quickly allayed; "Sparwood" is a champion of the breed. Cheers!

The chief enemies of the Alsatian are ignorance and prejudice. Known up to the time of the Great War as the "German Shepherd Dog," it carried a name which breathed peacefulness and the desire to protect. As soon as the war broke out the name became charged with undesirable attributes and qualities. So the kennel club in its wisdom deemed a new name to be desirable, and they chose that of "Wolf-hound." Clever, wasn't it? As "Sparwood" says "had they held a competition and offered a substantial cash prize for the most unfortunate name, then wolf-hound must have been adjudged the winner."

Let it be remembered that it is possible to keep a list of offences against any breed; because your terrier, feeling frisky, takes a bit out of the butcher boy's pants, do you expect all your neighbours, hearing of the incident, to write indignant letters signed "Pro Patria," "Householder," "Mother of Ten," "More to Come" and "Disillusioned," all demanding that this vicious

and dangerous breed be exterminated? Any dog, of any breed, if ill-treated or badly cared for, is liable to turn bad tempered, but of all breeds, when properly looked after, none ranks higher for intelligence, frankness, boldness and gentlemanly behaviour than the handsome Alsatian.

"Sparwood" gave two local examples of the Alsatian's trustworthiness and sagacity. A comparative baby paddling on the beach at Takapuna was bowled over by a wave and dragged, screaming into the undertow. A beautiful Alsatian, not belonging to the baby's family, saw the danger, dashed in and brought that little child out of peril, restoring it to its distracted mother. Despite the fact that the child was wearing a bathing suit only, she never received one pinch from that Alsatian's teeth.

Again, a Henderson lady with an Alsatian pup on a lead, was accosted recently by a bag-snatcher. As soon as she could, after recovering from the shock of the push which the thief had given her, she liberated her young guardian and sent him after the bag. He was only a youngster, but he knew his drill; notwithstanding the most brutal kicks, that pup got the bag back and restored it to his mistress. From my own experience I could quote many more such examples. Space, however, does not permit.

Please remember, though, that in classifying the Alsatian as dangerous, treacherous or unreliable, you do but display dreadful ignorance. If you have the room; if you are prepared to devote time and trouble, first in training, and thereafter in exercising; if you are big enough to have a big dog then you will find in the Alsatian a handsome friend who will reward your initial efforts on his behalf with a whole-hearted devotion to you and your interests, which will make you very proud and happy. But for his sake, and for your own, make sure that you can answer affirmatively all these questions:—

Have you plenty of space?
Have you sufficient time?
Will you feed him carefully and regularly?
Will you refrain from over-feeding him?
Will you groom him regularly and constantly?
Will you give him plenty of exercise—not a stroll round the block, but a good romp over the hills—every day?
If so, he will make you his god, and will worship you—Can you stand the strain?
Should you be unable to answer all the above with a definite affirmative, please don't buy an Alsatian.

Tourist and Health Resorts

THE talk by Mr. A. E. Wilson, recently given from 2YA, places me in a difficult position. When lecturers have, in my opinion, brought in advertising propaganda, I have never hesitated to condemn the practice. In this case the talk was interesting, but it was undoubtedly an advertisement for the New Zealand Railways and for the Chateau Tongariro; accordingly I should rebuke the speaker. It may be claimed, however, that a week-end spent at this famous resort is of national ser-

A BURNS CLUB CONCERT

*Will be Relayed from the Early Settlers' Hall,
Dunedin*

by
4YA



on
Aug. 19