

The VOICE of MICHAEL

Conducted
by "CRITIC"

Biased About America

THE observations of Dr. C. E. Beeby, of Canterbury College, from 3YA upon "Men and Machines in America" left me with the desire to have a heart-to-heart talk with the worthy speaker in continuation of the topic. Having earlier declared the average New Zealander's attitude to America to be compounded one part envy, one part jealousy, and one part pure ignorance, he now supplements that with a further division of us into two classes—one who says it is a wonderful place and cites the Woolworth Building, and another class which describes it as an "awful place—so different from New Zealand!" The doctor can satisfy neither of these people because he does think it a wonderful place, but he has never seen the Woolworth Building, and he does think it an awful place, but not very different from New Zealand! Thus brightly introducing matters the speaker justifies himself. He declines to yield adoration to size and engineering skill because he is biased about America. His bias is that men are of more value than machines—although he confessed to doubts on that point after seeing miles and miles of machine tenders—the machines seemed so much more intelligent! America's devotion to factory methods and standardised practices, he reminds us, was forced on her through cheap supplies of immigrant labour—labour incapable of doing much more than tending routine machinery. Because those methods are successful there, however, they might not be here, by reason of essential labour differences. But while American conditions in some ways are awful, they are not more so than our own; they are merely further advanced and represent the logical conclusion of our own. Being more rapid in execution, they have attained where we are still evolving. Like all things logical, they are sometimes absurd as, for instance, when New York's subways were placarded in respect of an automobile show "Why go to all the trouble of finding a parking place? Visit the automobile show by subway." I agree that that is beautiful. Against the evils of racketeering and booze there is much that is good in America to be seen and, as Mr. Beeby concluded, "whether we give or admire, whether we despise or envy, whatever our bias, we must admit that America is alive, more alive than any other portion of the world. What she will do with that life only the years can tell—but it will be worth watching." I found Dr. Beeby's talk merely an apertif. I want more, for I am biased about America too.

"The Melody of Speech"

I FOUND his talk on "The Melody of Speech," given by Mr. C. N. Baeyertz from 2YA on Saturday evening, wholly interesting and inspiring. Were it possible for all our speakers to be given the advantage of his instruction, there would be such an

improvement in the standard of Michael's utterance as to definitely intensify the interest of listeners and subtly improve the diction of the whole community. I am sure good will speedily spring from the seed sown by Mr. Baeyertz: in fact, am I right in imagining that the tone and manner of the announcement immediately following the conclusion of Mr. Baeyertz's address betrayed a conscious effort at improvement? If so, congratulations to Mr. Baeyertz!

Charging speakers with a general lack of knowledge of the technique of speech, Mr. Baeyertz asserted that the first thing to be done was to put their speaking voices in order. How many of the voices of our friends could be described, he asked, as colourless, unpleasant, lifeless, feeble, silly, flabby, adenoidal, muffled, husky, dull, shrill, high-pitched, hard, grinding, grating, harsh, wheezy, and unrestrained? That is a fearsome list indeed, only to be rectified by learning to breathe adequately: having our voices balanced correctly and brought down on to the teeth, and not shut up in our voice boxes. We can gain resonance by humming exercises—at which point I predict an undue strain upon bathroom acoustics! In Australia it would seem that the lips are rarely used, being mere obstacles in curtailing the enunciation of sound. New Zealand does not fall under this criticism—at least Mr. Baeyertz says so. Since his arrival in the Dominion Mr. Baeyertz has said some harsh things about his adopted country. He assures us that he says them as boldly in Australia, and 25-year-old memories of his former career in Dunedin lead me to believe that that may well be so. But with all diffidence, methinks there must be some little reservation. Our appetite for flattery is probably as insatiable as that of any other people in the world, but person-

ally I decline to believe that there is quite the disparity represented between Australia and New Zealand in this respect. Attending that splendid North v. South Island match on Saturday, I was regaled with the comments of many young hopefuls near by. Their efforts might be set alongside those classical quotations from the back streets of Sydney cited by Mr. Baeyertz, and in the comparison honours, I imagine, might fairly be easy. However, whether we be worse than Australia or not, there is unquestionably much room for improvement, and it is all to the good that Mr. Baeyertz should tell us how that improvement might be effected. Our prime fault is sound blindness, which is far more prevalent than colour blindness. We simply do not hear the errors of our own speech; hence we sadly abuse both "God's patience and the King's English." Our faulty enunciation and indistinct utterance, almost entirely due to inadequate or perverted sound perception, can be rectified only by assiduous study of the niceties of utterance. We certainly need more educators of the standard of Mr. Baeyertz. His address, embodying as it did a lifetime's experience in a subject he has definitely made his own, was valuable. I look for definite benefit from his visit to the Dominion. Whether one agrees with all that Mr. Baeyertz says or not, whether one condemns or condones his artistic egoisms, it must be conceded he has the crowning merit of at least being alive and believing in himself and his cause. To such enthusiasts I am always prepared to listen—for a time!

Building Strong Children

WHAT an excellent thing if all our mothers were listening to Dr.

Wilkie from 1YA last week! That would be asking the impossible, but I hope those who did hear the many valuable tips will not hesitate to pass them on.

While the professional note of authority was pleasantly apparent in the timbre of the speaker's voice, still it was not overdone. At no stage did she talk "over the heads" of her possible listeners. On the contrary, her hints, tips and instructions were couched in plain matter-of-fact English and were presented in such manner as to dispel the possibility of any question as to authority. It was not the first of her talks on the upbringing of children; for this instalment Dr. Wilkie dealt with that most important stage of a child's life which ranges between ten and fourteen years. While influences tend to mould the child right from birth—in fact, before birth—yet the period under discussion is of the most vital importance. The child is father to the man, says the old adage, and habits acquired during boy or girlhood have the tendency to remain. Encourage clean healthy habits, therefore; personal hygiene is tremendously important, and I was pleased to hear the Doctor lay emphasis on the importance of close attention to the ears, nose and teeth. While each or all of these different organs may cause trouble, the last two, if neglected, may result in very serious illness.

A final word as to sleep. Someone who probably suffered from insomnia invented the saying "Seven for a man, eight for a woman, and nine for child or fool." For my part I cheerfully admit a fondness for nine hours' sleep and would accept such gratefully on most nights were it not a practical impossibility. Realising the innuendo to which I have exposed myself, I am glad to hear that Dr. Wilkie believes in plenty of good sleep. The child, says she, ought to have at least eleven or twelve hours undisturbed slumber in as much fresh air as possible—the verandah for preference. On that basis the rest of us become entitled to at least nine hours sleep each night. Personally, I'm all for it.

The Change of a Nation

SOME interesting thoughts on the changed characteristics of the German races during the last century or so were expressed recently by an Auckland W.E.A. speaker. The talk was scheduled to Mr. Richmond; unfortunately I missed the announcement of the item, but feel almost sure that I remembered his voice, so I will presume the talk was his. It was very good; in fact, these W.E.A. talks and discussions from various of the main centres become increasingly valuable contributions to the evening's entertainment. If listeners are missing these it is a pity, because the subjects are well chosen, of vital and topical interest, and, especially when the principals themselves are lecturing, particularly well presented. It is unfortunate that Mr. Ross is so rarely available in Dunedin but, although students have done their best at times to mutilate

Evening Talks Worth Hearing

(This list is not complete, but selective only.)

Aug. 17—2YA, 7.40 p.m.	H. C. South	Books.
" 3YA, 7.30 "	.. E. J. Bell	Biographies, etc.
" 4YA, 9.5 "	.. A. J. Woods, M.A.	Internationalism.
Aug. 18—1YA, 7.40 "	.. "Sparwood" ("N.Z. Referee")	Dogs.
" 1YA, 9.5 "	.. Tom Bloodworth	International Labour.
" 4YA, 7.40 "	.. S. McCracken	"Next Century."
Aug. 19, 1YA, 7.40 "	.. Mrs. H. Hodges	Book Review.
" 2YA, 7.40 "	.. A. E. Wilson	Tourist & Health Resorts.
" 2YA, 9.5 "	.. Guy H. Scholefield, O.B.E.	International Talk.
" 3YA, 9.4 "	.. Te Ari Pitama	"The South Island Maori."
Aug. 20, 3YA, 7.30 "	.. J. M. Barnett	Forestry.
" 3YA, 9.5 "	.. W. Maehin	International Indebtedness
Aug. 21, 1YA, 7.40 "	.. George Graham	Maori Bird Lore.
" 2YA, 7.40 "	.. Dr. J. Gibb	Disarmament Conference.
" 3YA, 9.5 "	.. E. Iveagh Lord	"The Story of the Golden Coast."
" 3YA, 9.34 "	.. Karl Atkinson	"The Midas of Melody."
" 2YA, 9.40 "	.. Dr. Duncan Cook	Goitre.
Aug. 22, 1YA, 7.40 "	.. T. L. Lancaster, M.Sc., F.L.S.	Shrubs.
" 2YA, 7.40 "	.. R. J. Waghorn	Solar System.
" 3YA, 7.40 "	.. C. W. Hervey	Birds.