

IT was a joy to hear from 2YA Mr. Sidney Porter, a distinguished English ornithologist, scornfully castigate the people and the policy which have unnecessarily despoiled the Dominion of large areas of bush, and with it our unique birds. I understand Mr. Porter got up from a sick bed to keep his broadcasting appointment, and the birds and bird-lovers thank him the more for his contribution. Mr. Porter visited New Zealand on the invitation of a friend, who mapped out his itinerary. For this he was grateful, as otherwise he may have seen very little of our birds, for his first excursion, unaided, reminded him of a visit to Arabia.

WHERE once had stood a majestic forest was a treeless desert, producing nothing for man, bird or beast. Duly directed, the speaker repaired to the primeval forest and joy swelled in his heart, only to hear the timber-getters' axe. Necessity may demand we cut down trees, but Mr. Porter was at a loss to understand why this bushland, unsuitable for farming, was destined to be fired. The speaker could only conclude that native tree hatred has become an obsession.

VISITS to Tongariro Park, Waikaremoana, the Little Barrier, and other reserves where the birds, unafraid of man, are intimate friends, impressed Mr. Porter with the fact that there are some in the Dominion who are appreciative of our unrivalled heritage, but evidence everywhere of ruthless destruction of bush in locations quite unsuitable for tillage or grazing is a blot on New Zealand's fair name. Avaricious commercialism and preconceived vandalism have not been the only agencies by which we have proclaimed that our civilisation is a pestilence, for acclimatisation societies have done their share with deer, goats, stoats, and browsing animals. There are many thousands of residents in this country who have never seen a weka, the inquisitive fowl that a few short years ago had to be pushed off our doorstep each morning, and yet we allow members of acclimatisation societies impudently to propose the introduction of more vermin. The time is ripe for an inquisition, even the disintering of the remains of some, to be handed over to the secular arm.

THE "Myths and Legends" in music, featured by Mr. L. E. Strachan as the second portion of 2YA's recorded programme last Wednesday, made a delightful hour's entertainment. It is to be regretted that only one hour was available for the re-telling in music of these mythological and legendary tales, for such a wealth of material is available that a full evening's programme, indeed a series of programmes, could be arranged on such a theme with resultant pleasure and profit to practically every type of listener. Legendary lore has always been a course of inspiration for composers and we are indebted to myths and legends of the past for some of the greatest works in the annals of music. "The Flying Dutchman," for example, the overture to which opened Mr. Strachan's programme, ranks as one of the greatest of the Grand Operas. The legend which inspired Wagner to create this wonderful work is a classic myth of the sea. Driven by a gale, the ship of Van der Decken, a Dutch sea captain, vainly endeavoured to round the Cape of Good Hope. The captain, in spite of en-

treaties of the crew, swore he would not quit, if he had to sail the ocean to Eternity. To punish his blasphemy, he was condemned to sail the ocean forever in a phantom ship with a phantom crew. Such is Heine's legend.

IT is not surprising that the sea is depicted so graphically in Wagner's opera, for he composed it after a sea voyage which was full of disaster. In July, 1839, the young composer, then 26, accompanied by his wife and a huge Newfoundland dog, set sail from Riga for London, en route to Paris. "I shall never forget the voyage," he says. "It was full of disaster. Three times we nearly suffered shipwreck, and once were obliged to seek safety in a Norwegian harbour. The legend of the 'Flying Dutchman' was confirmed by the sailors, and the circumstances gave it a distinct and characteristic colour in my mind."



A

Descriptive Ballad

"The Village Blacksmith"

(a) "The Smithy."

(b) "The Church."

(Weiss).

By the

B.B.C. Dramatic Players.

With orchestra and effects, will

be broadcast from 3YA

On

THURSDAY, MARCH 30.

"HANSEL and Gretel," represented in Mr. Strachan's programme by the delightful "Dance Duet," reminds one that Lewis Carroll, author of "Alice in Wonderland," was a university professor of mathematics; for Engelbert Humperdinck, the composer of "Hansel and Gretel," was a deeply learned musician whose scholarship is manifest on every page of his delightful ginger-bread fairy-tales. It is said that Humperdinck wrote this little masterpiece to please his own children, without thought of publication, and it possesses just the naive spontaneity

required to give an air of probability to the legend. And as a legend it contains all the materials of delight.

THE German legends relating to Faust have inspired a wealth of musical creative effort, including two of the greatest of grand operas, one setting by Berlioz, and the other by Gounod. Doctor Faustus, the original of the dominant figure in these operas, was a legendary character, a metaphysician whose pseudo-logic brought him a large following of mystical half-wits of late mediaeval Germany. He was a rogue, who taught philosophy with his tongue in his cheek, and who, when casuistry approached exposure, kept the silence which is golden. The age was ripe for such a creature. The Reformation had displayed beliefs without establishing new ones. Artists were investigating pagan legends to create the Renaissance. Many remained faithful to mediaeval Rome, others followed Luther. Between extremes many were looking for a new prophet to lead them out of the metaphysical wilderness. The time was propitious for Doctor Faustus, who claimed power over diabolical agencies. Goethe's tragedy poem was on so vast a scale that it could not be condensed into a single opera. Gounod took from it but one single episode, and wrote the finest music he was destined to compose, producing, on the whole, the noblest opera that has yet come out of France.

IN the talk on "World Affairs," Dr. Guy H. Scholefield (2YA), mentioning that the recent elections in Germany were full of interest to those who have retained belief in the institution of democratic government, remarked that while the result was not altogether conclusive, the best organised and most virile party, the Nazis, were consolidating their gains by means wholly divorced from democratic ideas. The changing positions of parties were not easy to follow, but the last election is the result of the relief to landowners' policy, which was the cause of previous elections, and the settlement of the agrarian question, aggravated by scandals in administration, appears to be relegated to partial oblivion by the animosities of parties. Religious differences, in addition to economic opinions, complicate political issues in Germany, but the disturbed conditions of the country generally is an indication of popular revolt against artificial measures which have impoverished an enterprising and leading nation. While the world sits in conference, Germany has progressed towards starvation. Dr. Scholefield made reference to cabled reports of Europe being on the verge of war as a result of Nazi successes and excesses, but recalled that Adolf Hitler had stated often that his policy was a peaceful one, and the world could pass judgment upon him after he had had time to settle internal problems.

ONE of Miss Nelle Scanlan's recent talks (2YA) was addressed as a

tonic to those suffering inordinately from depression debility, and "Farming in Other Lands" was a further contribution to the "Count Your Blessings" series. It was remarked that transport had changed the world, and no longer was one country all sufficient in its ability to supply the needs of modern existence. In a properly functioning world, the open plains of the colder climates should supply the cereal requirements of all, and the luscious fruits that could be grown only in the tropics should be at command of the residents of temperate climes. Other butter-producing countries were not favoured as our own. Bounteous Nature has made New Zealand the ideal dairy farm that should, and will, supply less fortunately placed peoples with the best of butter, when we return to the age of reason. The present may be a difficult time, but in some other lands, farming is a difficult proceeding at all times. In a country where cattle are not housed and where electricity is available to the practically isolated, the first of the arts is incomparably easier, and more pleasant, than in most countries.

SPEAKING of Java, where teeming millions require the tillage of terraced mountain-sides, and patches the size of a hearthrug in the middle of a stream, Miss Scanlan mentioned that the native farmer soon mortgaged his worldly possessions to the enterprising Chinese, which led to the Government opening state pawn-shops. These benevolent institutions are an advance on the Chinese money-lender, but I doubt if they are as solicitous of the farmer's welfare as our own State Advances. Miss Scanlan described Java's favourite dish—rice-tafel, and admitted that she enjoyed it, and I never knew anyone that didn't. On the biggest plate obtainable one heaps a replica of Mount Egmont in rice, adds thirty or forty "sombals"—anything from coconut to dried or raw fish, and a leg of a chicken—then over the top. It is a feed, and the Dutch deserve every real praise for thinking of it. Its inventor should be remembered in marble!

IN Ireland, Miss Scanlan said, the farmers have concentrated upon supplying high quality goods for a high price, but conditions of living cannot compare with those in New Zealand. In Canada, one passes through "days of wheat," but the housewife has no electricity. In Denmark cows must be tethered, and in Holland the cattle live under the same roof as the farmer, who may step from his bedroom into the cattle byre. In England the farmer retires to bed by candle light, and while all to-day are experiencing hard times, the amenities of farming in New Zealand are an advance upon those of other countries. Miss Scanlan deplored the supplications of conflicting interest in these days of national emergency, beseeched all to co-operate in facing the task of progression towards coming prosperity, and solicited all to give due praise to those who at least are making an attempt to do something for their country.

ON Saturday night Mr. John Brownlee's rich melodious voice thrilled us all, and his style and artistry indicated what is demanded of a singer in the European cities. The superb recordings of this gifted singer are always welcome in a broadcast pro-