

The Southern Stations

by "Proton"

THE trials and tribulations that beset small countries endeavouring to foster national customs and traditional institutions, when they border upon great unsympathetic, aggressive nations, was the burden of Mr. J. T. Paul's analytical talk from 4YA. It was explained tersely, yet very fully, how the doctrine of self-determination was responsible for the territorial alteration of the map of Europe, when the Peace Treaty was negotiated. The talk dealt with Russia's Baltic neighbours and the difficulties each had experienced with adjacent Great Powers. All had cause to consider Russia an enemy and a trial, notwithstanding the fact that various republics had concluded treaties with her, by which the parties undertook to refrain from interference and propagandist penetration. Finland, whose people are of Asiatic origin and conservative, has encountered severe antagonism from the Soviets, and similarly other nationals detached from Imperial Russia in 1917 have experienced an underground interference that has been most burdensome. Poland with the added difficulty of the corri-

dor, with Germans on both sides, and Russia fomenting discontent among all nationalities, has had a particularly difficult task, and the position to-day seems fruitful for more trouble in the future.

IT is a pity if listeners gathered from Mr. George Lawn's very informative talk (3YA) upon "China—Past, Present, and Future," that the principle of extra-territoriality exacted by foreign Powers has been a repressive measure by which China has greatly suffered. Had it not been for extraterritoriality China would have had little contact with organised modernism, Shanghai would never have been, Canton, Foochow, and Hankow would have remained mud-flat villages, and Sun Yat Sen's "Three Principles" would have been strangled in embryo. Although extraterritoriality was more than a hint that foreigners had no faith in Chinese ideas of justice, it was given effect to solely because of Chinese corruption, and only the most militant of meek anti-imperialists can find an apology for flagrant depravity. It would seem there is little hope for Russia in the community of nations unless the principle of extraterritoriality is enforced in that benighted land of slavery to tyrants' plans.

IT will be a pity, also, if from Mr. Lawn's talk, an impression was created that the present Nationalist (so called) Government represents all China. Sun Yat Sen's relatives and connections hold sway in four out of twenty-two provinces, and while it is conceivable that the few score millions on the coast may eventually impose their will upon the hundreds of millions that have so far successfully resisted the light as seen by the implacable Doctor, it should be emphatically reiterated that China as a single entity has not existed since the revolution. The disgruntled students who learned democracy in foreign lands represent but a handful of China's four hundred odd millions, and they have as much right to claim that negotiation should be conducted through them as have the few Bolsheviks who tyrannise Russia.

AS the 1933 season for contests in the noble art is just commencing. Mr. J. T. Burrows's delightful talk upon "Boxing in Literature" was a timely one. It was said that 100 years ago every gentleman learned the science, and a proficient and fashionable teacher could earn £1000 a year. By 1814 the sport of boxing had in the estimation of the gentlemen of England reached high-water mark. It is, therefore, natural that the sport should engage the attention of novelists and poets, and Mr. Burrows quoted freely Byron, Blackmore, Dickens, Conan Doyle, George Borrow, Masfield and many more whose descriptions of fights make some of the most stirring reading in our literature. Mr. Burrows said that many of his hearers would perhaps remark that the omission of certain writers' descriptions of particular battles left his talk incomplete, but there can be few who will not agree that among the most glorious epics are those given us by George Borrow and Conan Doyle.

Auckland Notes

By "Neutron"

ON Saturday "Old Wire Whiskers" commenced a new series of talks that deal with the well-known "Marie Celeste" mystery. I wish he hadn't. Not that his first instalment was uninteresting—this speaker couldn't make "the strangest tale in the annals of seafaring" uninteresting, try he ever so hard—but I like him best when he tells of ocean racing through the storms of the "Roaring Forties," pearls, strange sea monsters and the wonders of the great waters he has seen and describes so well. However, many listeners will be curious to learn if "Old Wire Whiskers" subscribes to the generally accepted solution of this sea mystery.

"THE Laws of Alfred," as interpreted from 1YA by Mr. Julius Hogben, were as entertaining as they were instructive. Alfred, said the speaker, founded the Navy, introduced education, and expressed a dying wish to be remembered by some of his good works. Actually, "the only thing you remember about him is a story I do not propose to tell." Alfred enacted that the Ten Commandments should be part of the laws of England. People then had to "honour thy father and thy mother." Obviously the Ten Commandments had never been part of New Zealand law. The Right of Sanctuary, as explained by Mr. Hogben, took curious form. If a man were attacked by his enemies he could shelter in a church and could not be dragged out for seven days. In the interim, however, no one must feed him, so that he had two chances, one of starvation and another of being killed by those outside. In Alfred's time a dog that bit cost its owner 6/- for the first offence and, if he continued to feed it, each subsequent bite was on a rising scale. To-day English law gave a dog the first bite for nothing. Public slander meant the excision of the offending tongue. A freeman of Alfred's day had to observe a number of legal holidays, including twelve days at Christmas, three days before and seven after Easter, besides a fortnight in the autumn and plenty of saints' days. The Saxon freeman was thus almost better off than his modern counterpart, the bank manager, "who is about the only free man to-day." Alfred introduced education, so the price of brains went up: it cost 30/- to crack a skull in his time, as against 10/- of the previous lawgiver. Despite the depression it was apparent that not many of us would exchange present troubles for the potentialities of Alfred's times and laws.

"RESERVED" on the programme is not always a guarantee of something good, but it was last Wednesday, when 1YA presented Mr. George Gordon, a tenor from Hikurangi, whose full voice and effortless singing was a real treat. This item was "one out of the box."

MR. S. J. GUDSELL'S talk from 1YA of New Zealand athletic champions would bring back memories to many. Leslie McLaughlin, finest all-rounder in the world, champion from 75 yards

to a mile, whose times under the conditions still stand; Randolph Rose, the long-legged Masterton farmer; and a host of other great ones of the track ran again for those who had seen them in their prime. Doubtless, too, these talks will be an incentive for the young ones, spurring them on to something worthy of New Zealand's great athletes of the past.

MR. PERCY HAMBLIN'S Automobile Odyssey, as told from 1YA, took him this week only from San Diego to Los Angeles, the cheapest place in the United States to live in, but then there was a lot to see and hear about. Past pretty towns on a wide ocean-side highway and then by towns once pretty, but ruined, artistically, by the finding of "the greasy gold of the earth-oil," where crowding derricks and corrugated shanties replaced trim gardens and semi-Spanish bungalows, they came at last to the City of the Angels with its tremendous human traffic, vehicular and pedestrian, alike controlled by automatic signals. Then there was the Olympic Stadium, which made Rome's Coliseum seem tiny, and the Museum, with its reconstruction of all the prehistoric animals that once roamed California from skeletons found in an ancient lake of tar.

A Poetry Magazine

ALL who are interested in the evolution of literary talent will find "The N.Z. Mercury" much to their taste. This is a new publication, and one well calculated to appeal to students of the art of self-expression in prose and verse. Duplicated on tinted paper, with cover of a darker shade, the magazine is attractively compiled, and contains poems by the late Marjory Nicholls, R. B. Castle, Flavell, C. R. Allen, F. Alexa Stevens and others equally well known; together with examples of the work of a younger school, offering interesting scope to critics who find pleasure in picking a winner amid burgeoning talent. An arresting article on Masfield is written by a well-known journalist who hides her identity under the nom-de-plume of "Jane," while some charming lines are contributed by a southern patron of letters. It is hoped this little publication, unique in its way, has come to stay. Copies at 7d a single copy and 3/- for six months (post free) may be obtained on application to the Bryant Duplicating Bureau, 12 Cuba Street, Wellington.

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