

radio programmes. Everywhere one finds the same material comforts, the same fanatical cleanliness and order, the same superb middle-class virtues and regrettable middle-class evils. And yet one gathers with astonishment that half of these wooden houses—situated possibly on some faint slope or eminence—are tenanted by a high nobility of the oldest vintage and the haughtiest pretensions, while the remainder are inhabited by obscure masses who will never “count socially.” And both the élite and the masses believe profoundly in these differences, and are passionately concerned either to maintain or to remove them. And though the sectional barrier is totally invisible, it is none the less electrically charged. And woe to any member of the high nobility who strays across the wholly imaginary zodiac which divides the social firmament, or who ventures to speak of “levelling” in a land where State action and other slower social forces have practically levelled every difference to the ground. We may prophesy that neither he nor his seed will be allowed to prosper, and that whatever shreds of reputation or consideration have been left him by the men will be gnawed from his bones by the inveteracy of the women.

Nór is this queer conflict simplified or mitigated by all the useless, unreasonable voices of those who persist in chanting of direst revolution in a key suitable to other times and circumstances and who turn every fact and problem in New Zealand into dialectical smoke. From these less than any one dare expect a glimmer of realism and lucidity in social matters, from these less than any one a fragment of constructive help and guidance. For while they may be skilled in using facts to the greater glory of their theory, and in using individuals in the service of their future world order, they are as little interested in a true understanding of the former as they are interested in co-operating with the latter. And since their future world order, though sketched in scientific phrase, achieves at best the poetic clearness of John’s heavenly Jerusalem, it would be rash to trust them with the smallest

enterprise, let alone with the whole refashioning and direction of society.

And one remembers further, in one’s ever-narrowing perspective, how all these strange antagonisms were heightened and embittered by the war. For while the war might have embalmed genuine differences and appeased antagonists who were fighting about something, it only served to deepen the schisms between opponents who were fighting about nothing. The nobility might have seen in it yet another opportunity for that unreasoning self-immolation in the service of a system whose merits they only inadequately appreciated, while their opponents might reasonably have seen in it the least imperialistic of wars waged against the most debased of enemies. And all parties might have rejoiced in such a happy harmony between the paths of patriotism and political progress. Yet both preferred to quarrel over their several reasons for pursuing a common end, and both sought and discovered in each other the comfort of an enemy within the gates. The war made manifest the deep illiberalism always inwardly characteristic of New-Zealanders. They sought scapegoats for the undischarged animosities which were held in leash by their peacetime meekness. Some found such scapegoats in conscientious objectors, in refugees, and in university professors, while others found them in

