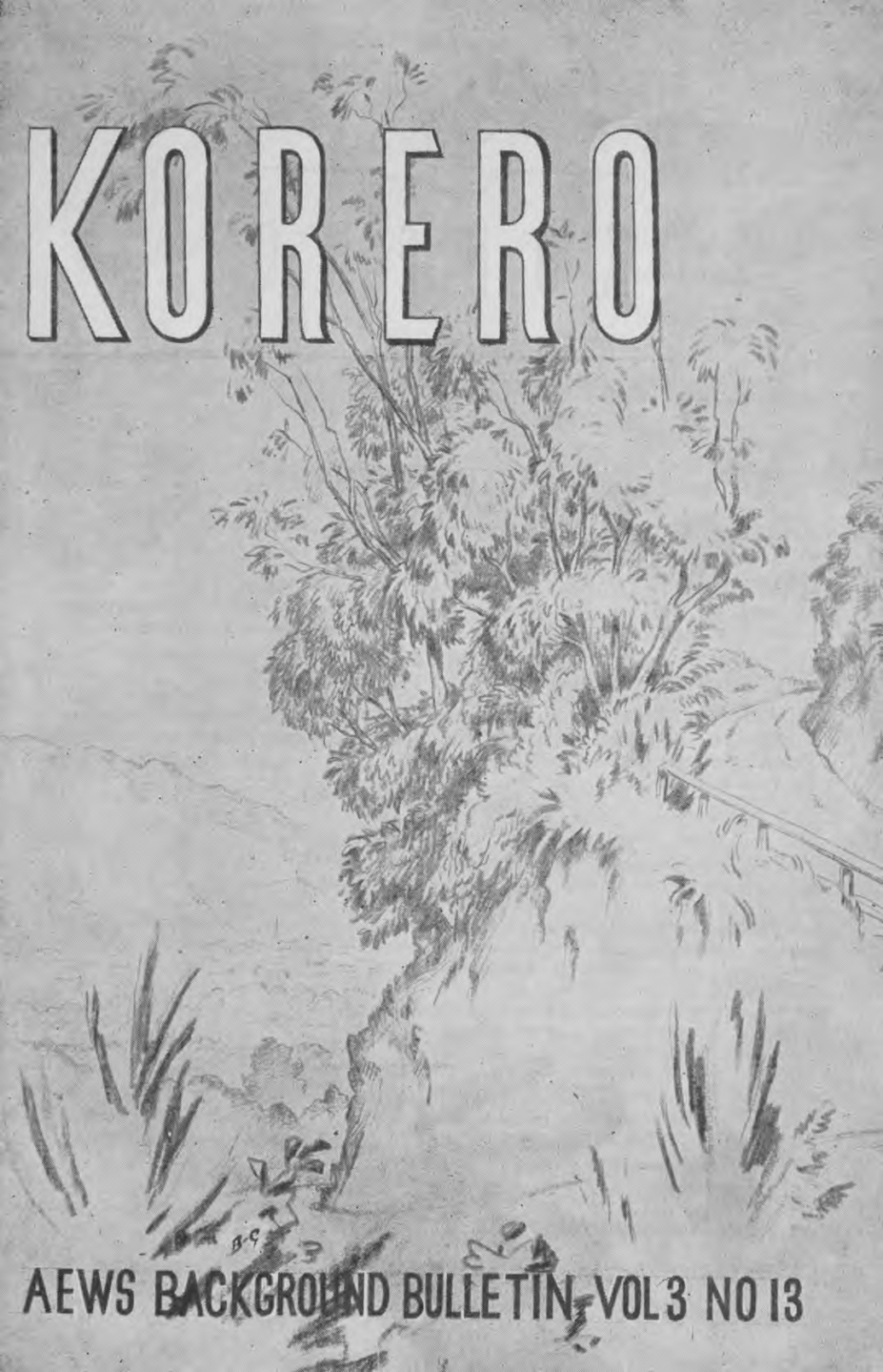
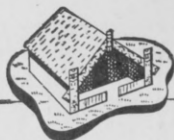


KORERO



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K O R E R O

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Nairn Transport



A KORERO Interview

GERALD AND Norman Nairn were well known in Blenheim, where their father, Dr. Nairn, was in practice for many years. In the days when communications throughout the district were primitive, Dr. Nairn earned the gratitude of many a sick person by his willingness to turn out in all weathers over roads bad or non-existent. Before the last war the two Nairn brothers were in partnership in a motor-cycle business in Blenheim. Norman Nairn, who was in England, enlisted after the outbreak of war, and Gerald went away with the 10th Canterbury Regiment. The brothers later met in Palestine. They were there when hostilities ended, and decided to stay in Palestine in business. They received financial backing from a Syrian, and formed the Nassar-Nairn Co. At that time it was possible to buy Army transport—Fords for the most part—do up the vehicles, and sell them again at a large profit. Fords could be bought from Army stocks for £50 to £60, and resold on the civilian market in Palestine and Egypt for between £500 and £600. The business however, was not quite as Elysian as it appeared. The company lost money. It was plain that prospects in the motor business in Palestine were becoming progressively less rosy.

The brothers next became interested in transport services, and the Nairn Transport Co. was formed. The company operated a freight and passenger service on the route between Beirut-Haifa;

£8,000 was put up by a backer, who charged 15 per cent interest on the loan. Norman Nairn went to America to buy suitable cars, and returned with "steamers." The steam car was even then a fine vehicle, and had many advantages over the petrol-driven car. It was unfortunate that these were outweighed by disadvantages that soon became painfully evident. In many places there was no road at all between Haifa and Beirut, and the Nairns had to improvise a route. Near Acre the cars had to travel along the beach, making a straight dash when the waves receded, and swerving madly up the beach when an especially large one threatened to overwhelm the car. On inland stretches the road was often desert country, and the car would career wildly over the rocks and boulders which formed the surface. The early steam car had one serious failing. When driven hard it used to run its boiler dry. The Nairns' steam cars were no exception, and in time acquired a reputation. As a result, when the driver received warning of trouble from a sheet of flame from under the bonnet it was unnecessary to warn the passengers. They had already taken to the desert and were speeding to a safe distance in small clouds of dust.

As the roads improved, the company met with increasing competition on the route. This, and the trouble with their cars, decided the Nairns to strike out in a new direction. The steam cars were sold to Palestinian Jews with the company's

best wishes, and plans were made for the opening of a regular service across the desert from Damascus to Baghdad.

This service seemed to the Nairns to be particularly tempting. The general opinion was that the scheme was impracticable. The engines could not stand the heat and dust. The load of petrol, oil, water, and food to be carried was too great. The going was too rough and the tires would not stand up to it. The Bedouin, the Druse, and other interested tribes would hold up and rob the cars, and probably shoot the passengers. And in any case, the drivers would certainly get lost *en route*.

It was therefore, to the accompaniment of much wagging of heads that the Nairns made their first experimental Damascus-Baghdad journey in April, 1923. They carried on the car 80 gallons of petrol, as well as oil, water, food, and camping equipment. Navigation was principally by compass, as there were then no tracks. Traces that might have been left by a camel caravan, for instance, would be quickly obscured by wind and weather. The trip of $2\frac{1}{2}$ days was uneventful. After the first trip further tests were made, and it was found possible to operate in even the hottest weather.

A regular Damascus-Baghdad service was most important. The large European staff of the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. was isolated. Mail, freight, and passengers had to travel via the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, two of the most trying stretches of water in the world. If a service made it possible to travel overland from Baghdad to the Mediterranean, there would be a great saving in time and expense. It is interesting that when the Nairn Transport Co. began to carry mail, the mail time from the Persian Gulf to Britain was cut from about five weeks to ten days. The company received a Post Office subsidy of 1s. 6d. a pound on mail, which seems scarcely adequate.

The British Embassy in Baghdad were asked for support and encouragement. The Embassy, however, considered that the service was not practicable and would give no assistance. The first cars used were Buick tourers, followed later by Cadillacs. There were instances in early days of cars being held up by

Bedouin raiders, the cars looted and the passengers left with little more than their socks. In some cases the car would also be stolen. This would be followed a week or two later by something particularly infuriating: the company's service would again be interfered with by a band of raiders using one of the firm's own cars.

To check these losses the Nairns engaged Mohammed Bassam. Bassam was a leader of camel convoys along the same route and was well known to the local sheikhs. Not only did he provide a camel driver as guide for each car, but he also acted as liaison officer between Nairn Transport and the local chiefs. The liaison, of course, took the well-known form of judiciously distributed largesse. The average Arab is extremely lazy, and when offered the chance of making money by doing nothing at all he will gladly co-operate. All that Mohammed Bassam asked of the chiefs was that they should stop, and order their men to stop, molesting the company's cars. This scheme was first tried in October, 1923, but was not kept up for long. The raiders no longer held up cars, but the immunity cost the company £2,000 a year. And the camel driver guides were a complete failure. Although able to direct a slow moving camel, the faster cars upset them completely and they seemed to lose all sense of direction, wandering miles from the route. The services of Mohammed Bassam and his henchmen were dispensed with, therefore, and reliable compasses were installed in the cars. These proved satisfactory, nor did raiding parties again in normal times seriously interfere with the company's service.

There was one unpleasant incident during the Druse rebellion in 1925. A small convoy carrying a consignment of gold for one of the banks was ambushed 80 miles from Damascus. The gold was stolen and a British driver killed. A pursuit was organized at once, and three of the robbers were chased until their camels dropped or were shot. The three men were captured and publicly hanged in Damascus. Robbing from the Nairn Transport Co. was seen to be undignified and unprofitable.

By now, continued traffic over the Baghdad-Damascus desert route was beginning to mark a well-defined track, so that even compasses were no longer essential. Traffic was increasing, and the Nairns extended their service to the Mediterranean coast at Haifa. A coastal service was also run, linking Homs and Tripoli with Haifa, and turning inland to Jerusalem. Most of the Nairn's cars by this time were Cadillacs and larger than the original Buicks. Increased traffic, however, made it essential to obtain buses. The first models used were of the six-wheeled twin-axle type. These were used on the desert run only, as their size made them unsuitable for the coastal route.

The two great difficulties of desert travel are dust and heat. An ordinary



winding glass window is useless against the finer desert dust, which will find its way through the smallest crevice. Nor is the average bus, however well ventilated, calculated to remain habitable in temperatures of 120 degrees and more. To overcome these difficulties, Norman Nairn travelled to the United States and placed the order for the first two of the monster coaches which have since made the Nairn Transport standard of comfort famous all over the world. The coaches were mounted on a Marmon-Harrington chassis which had eighteen wheels. The total weight of each vehicle was 26 tons, and each was designed to carry 40 to 45 passengers, and reasonable luggage.

The coaches were of Pullman design, built of stainless steel. The interiors were air-conditioned and fully dustproof, and

were cool in summer and warm in winter. Meals were served on board, and a well-stocked bar was kept (during this war a wider variety of excellent liquor was to be found on the Nairn buses than in any hotel in the Middle East). These vast vehicles were at the time, and probably still are, the finest of the kind in the world. They run on Diesel fuel, and complete the journey of about 550 miles from Damascus to Baghdad at an average speed of 30 miles per hour, which means a speed of 55 m.p.h. wherever conditions permit. At present the two Pullman coaches are still going well, and each has covered about 800,000 miles. This is 250,000 miles more than was thought possible.

Before this war the French Government in Syria and the Lebanon was quick to realize the value of Nairn Transport to those countries, and were most helpful. Not only did they pay the company a small annual subsidy, but also permitted the duty-free importation of spare parts and equipment for the firm—a valuable concession.

Tires have always been the firm's greatest running problem. The route is said to be the hardest in the world for tire wear. Five rubber companies have sent men to study the problem on the spot. With the costliest make of heavy-duty tire the best mileage ever obtained was 16,000 miles. Synthetic rubber during the war reduced the average life of a tire to about 2,000 miles. At present the Nairns have a priority call on genuine rubber tires from South Africa, and this has improved the position.

Nairn Transport has not always had a monopoly of the Baghdad-Damascus traffic. Eight or ten firms have in the past started in competition. Gerald Nairn estimated that about £200,000 had been lost in this way. The most serious threat came from a British firm, who started with fine equipment and a large staff in a determined effort to oust Nairn Transport from its position. The Nairns put themselves and their staff on half-pay and declared war. Nineteen months later they took over the assets of the rival company. Much of the Nairns' success is undoubtedly because both brothers have a thorough first-hand knowledge of every phase of their business. For example,

Gerald Nairn drove one of the cars for seven years, put in further time in the workshops, and also knows the administrative side of the business thoroughly. This is also true of the other brother, Norman. The Nairns can therefore quickly pick any administrative weakness and can take measures to strengthen it.

Although dust and heat are generally supposed to be the principal irritants in desert travel, mud and water are even more objectionable. Contrary to popular belief, much of the Damascus-Baghdad route becomes a sea of mud in wet weather. The flooded Tigris was also formidable in the days when the only way of crossing was by an unsubstantial pontoon bridge. The bridge was certainly dangerous for heavy traffic, as the weight of a large vehicle allowed water to flow into the pontoons and threatened to sink the bridge. At times it was necessary to disembark the passengers, send the bus over empty, and have the passengers follow on foot. It is also true that, in exceptionally bad weather and with the river Tigris in high flood, passengers have been seasick when crossing the bridge. There was an incident in the early days of Nairn Transport when the pontoon bridge was carried away with the cars on it. The cars were tipped into the river, and the drivers, of whom Gerald Nairn was one, had to swim nearly half a mile to shore. In spite of such difficulties, the Nairns claim that in the whole history of the company they have never lost a mail. They have now been carrying mail for more than twenty years, so that their record is remarkable. They have also in the past carried the diplomatic bags for the British, American, German, French, and Italian representatives.

When the French Government in Syria threw in its lot with Vichy, Nairn Transport was told to go. It locked up its buildings and went. Here the company might well have come to an unpleasant end. The Germans were aware of the quality of much of the transport plying between Syria and Iraq. Had they not been so severely handled in Crete, there is little doubt that German troops would quickly have appeared in Iraq and Syria. To take over all available transport, a German representative was flown to Syria at this

time. The plane was mistakenly fired on shortly before landing. Little damage was done and the plane made a normal landing. Only then was it found that the German representative was dead in his seat with an accidental bullet through the heart. But for this the Nairns would have lost all their equipment. As it was, when they returned to Damascus after the occupation of Syria they found that their buildings and machinery were intact. Two of the small cars had been used by the French for a few days, but had been returned to the garage and the place re-locked. The Nairn brothers can therefore say with some truth that one bullet saved their business.

The Iraqi rebellion also caused an interruption to the service. Much equipment was stolen. Also, before closing down, there were cases of cars and drivers being stripped of everything by the insurgents. Even the seats of the cars were ripped open in case they were carrying hidden gold. Gerald Nairn became O.C. the guard of twenty-four men at the gates of the British Embassy in Baghdad. In case of serious trouble the chances of this guard's survival were regarded as so slim that they were dubbed "The Suicide Squad." The trouble never became bad enough to test the accuracy of this surmise.

For the last two or three years, Nairn Transport has been principally engaged in carrying Army traffic, with a priority given to officials and their families of the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. Many of those people have been marooned through the war in isolated places on the Persian Gulf, and are now being given the opportunity to take leave in England or elsewhere. At the same time, their reliefs are being carried in the opposite direction.

About 42,000 passengers a year are at present being carried on Army business. Vehicle maintenance is a problem. Two Pullman coaches are assigned to the civil and Anglo-Persian oil traffic, while the other buses used for Army passengers are repaired and built up from bits and pieces taken from old buses. Many of the bodies have been made in the company's own workshops. The Nairn brothers are about to alter their service considerably. They intend to purchase in the United States

smaller buses with a greatly increased cruising speed. With these they will cut the time of the journey from eighteen hours to thirteen hours. This will be sufficiently fast to compete fairly favourably with the air lines, five or six of which provide services from Baghdad.

During the war the Army has built a tar-sealed road from Haifa to Baghdad, which has made road travel much easier. Nairn Transport uses a triangular route, as their transport travels from Haifa south-east to Jerusalem, inland to Amman, and from there north and east till the main Damascus-Baghdad road is reached about 265 miles from Baghdad. On the outward journey the buses run direct to Damascus and then to the coast at Haifa.

The Nairns well realize that the days of a profitable road transport service over so long a route are nearly numbered. Iraq, Iran, Syria, and the Lebanon have their national airways, competing over the same territory. Gerald Nairn has had his own plane for many years and does most of his travelling by air. Air transport competition is at present so fierce that the Nairns consider it sound policy to keep out of that particular war for a time. They are therefore about to begin their new service of small fast buses, to run until the airlines have cut each other's throats. It may well be that once again Nairn Transport will be able to step in and take over the assets.



Crossing the Tigris.

ON BREAKING HABITS

To begin knocking off the habit in the evening, then the afternoon as well and, finally the morning too is better than to begin cutting it off in the morning and then go on to the afternoon and evening. I speak from experience as regards smoking and can say that when one comes to within an hour or two of smoke-time one begins to be impatient for it, whereas there will be no impatience after the time for knocking off has been confirmed as a habit.—SAMUEL BUTLER.

THE CASE AGAINST THE THRILLER

A stylized illustration at the top of the page. On the left, a hand emerges from a dark, jagged shape, holding a knife. On the right, a woman with curly hair is shown in profile, reading a book. The background is dark and textured.

BY W.J. SCOTT

IN AN editorial of a few years ago, the *Times Literary Supplement* had this to say: "The literary die-hard's case against the thriller crumbled when the dreadful truth was revealed that Cabinet Ministers, Bishops, Judges, dons, members of the Royal Society, and even Royal Academicians were unashamedly thrilled by the thriller." In the *Nation* of November 25, 1944, Joseph Wood Krutch wrote: "It is read either aggressively or shamefacedly by nearly everyone, and it must be, at the present moment, the most popular of all literary forms. To these witnesses to the popularity of the thriller dozens of others from literary sources and one's own personal acquaintance could be added. The fact with which we are faced is that this literary form has been accepted as defensible reading by the educated (including W. B. Yeats, Woodrow-Wilson, T. S. Eliot, and André Gide), and that the literary defence which was at first apologetic has become markedly more emphatic and positive in the last few years. This change in tone can mean one of two things—either the detective novel has improved to the point where it passes the tests for good literature, or the critical judgment of the educated reader has deteriorated. I am going to argue that, unfortunately for the health of literature and criticism, it means the latter.

Let me begin with a very obvious admission: some detective novels are better than others. The Sherlock Holmes stories are better than the Colwyn-Danes of the *Champion*, the Lord Peter Wimsey stories better than those of Edgar Wallace and Ellery Queen. But what I will not admit—and cannot admit without viola-

tion of my standards of judgment and reason—is that detective stories are ever good literature. The proper business of literature is, and has always been, to interpret man to man, to show human nature in action, to illuminate any and every aspect of experience by the power of the creative imagination. This is something that the detective novel is prevented by the conditions of its existence from doing. Its emphasis is invariably and inevitably on the kind of plot which keeps the reader guessing, springs a dramatic surprise, and ties up all the loose ends with a neatness unknown in real life.

To this main purpose all else must be subordinated—motives, character, inner conflicts, the clash of ideas and codes, and the emotional quality and significance of experience. If the writer becomes more interested in these than in the mathematical formulæ of his plot, he then engages in the proper business of literature and ceases to write detective fiction. Dreiser's *American Tragedy* and Dostoevskii's *Brother Karamozov* always seem to me highly illuminating illustrations of my argument. Both contain all the elements of the detective story, and any one of the dozens of competent detective story-writers could translate either into a very effective example of the type they traffic in. But Dreiser and Dostoevski were more interested in telling the truth about their characters—why they were as they were, what went on in their minds, what forces within themselves and without they had to struggle against—than in limiting the number of loose ends in the interests of a neat plot with a crushing climax. In the latter part of his career

Dickens wrote some novels—*Bleak House*, *Our Mutual Friend*, *Edwin Drood*—which contain the elements of the modern story of mystery and detection, but, like Dreiser and Dostoevski, always remembered his proper business. As Edmund Wilson puts it (*New Yorker*, October 14, 1944), he "invested his plots with a social and moral significance that made the final solution a revelatory symbol of something that he wanted seriously to say."

A few years ago, when it became obvious that the intellectual classes were now reading thrillers, the customary defence was that they were a "harmless form of relaxation." *The Press*, Christchurch, published in 1937 or thereabouts a symposium containing the views of a clergyman, two members of Parliament, two professors, a farmer, a soldier, the town clerk, a doctor, a detective, and one or two others. All except one member of Parliament, the detective (!), and the doctor ("I read them when I was twenty, but I have never become twenty again") were more or less regular readers of detective stories, and three of them defended their taste on the above ground. The clergyman said, "most of them are harmless and enjoyable, provided they keep off unpleasant subjects, which are not at all necessary. I think that a clever mystery tale trains the mind"; one professor said, "I find them a good form of mental relaxation"; the soldier said, "they are often a source of harmless relaxation." In an article contributed a year or two later to the literary page in the *Wellington Evening Post*, "A.M." went further: "The intellectual, poor chap, is expected to be strung up all his waking hours. Very seldom does he live up to such a standard; he believes in relaxing now and then. Thereby he strengthens his taste and widens his sympathies." He went on to suggest that a cause of the great popularity of the thriller was "dissatisfaction with the tiresome psychology and sex-saturation of so many contemporary 'serious' novels"—an explanation that was echoed by the Dean of Durham when he stated: "The modern novelist has driven some of the most respectable of us to detective stories where, if one is not on the side of the angels, one is at least on the side of

the police." More recently still, Joseph Wood Krutch and Bernard de Voto have repeated this explanation in slightly different form, arguing that the serious novel has become so philosophical, psychological, and symbolic that readers have abandoned it for the detective novel which remains true to the story-telling tradition.



These explanations and excuses really all carry their own reply; they are boomerangs of a devastating sort that in themselves supply convincing evidence that the critical judgment of the educated has deteriorated. Consider the excuse of "harmless relaxation." Applied to reading, "relaxation" can have only one meaning—"lowering our standards and accepting books that we know are not good for the sake of an ephemeral excitement." The descent of the clergyman and the others from the higher to the lower level means, of course, that harm has already been done to their taste, else they would not feel the need or the desire to read at the lower level. A.M.'s contention that, by relaxing, the intellectual "strengthens his taste and widens his sympathies" is an amusing sophistry, like the clergyman's, "I think a clever mystery tale trains the mind." If the questions are asked "Strengthens taste for what?" "Trains the mind for what?", the logical answers must be "Strengthens the taste for detective stories and their like," "trains the mind

for more mystery tales." It is naively foolish to argue that one's taste for the good can be strengthened by making a willing emotional response to the bad, or that an acceptance of the falsified picture of human life in the detective stories can widen one's sympathies with real people. Obviously "strengthens" must be "weakens," and "widens" must be "narrows." Such reading is scarcely "harmless relaxation!"

To lay the blame for one's taste for thrillers on the psychological and philosophical tendencies of the serious novel is no less foolish. If he were restricted to a choice between the two types—the philosophical novel and the thriller—the discriminating reader who could not read the former would stop reading modern fiction. But there is no question of any such restricted choice; among the thousands of novels published every year there are many that are neither tediously philosophical nor detective stories; a considerable number of them are realistic



novels in the story-telling tradition. Though not very good, they are likely to be much better than detective stories; at least some make an attempt to tell the truth as well as tell a story, which the thriller cannot do.

Anyway, the discriminating reader's choice of reading is not confined to modern fiction or to fiction alone, but ranges through literature of all types and periods.

The implication that if serious modern fiction fails you there is nothing else to read but the thriller can be made only by those whose scale of values has gone wrong.

Few of the critics who defend the thriller dare claim that any examples of the type are among the great books. What they do claim, however, is that some of the best modern prose is to be found in the better detective novels. Edmund Wilson's reply seems to me to be adequate. "I had often heard people say that Dorothy Sayers wrote well . . . But really she does not write very well; it is simply that she is more consciously literary than most of the other detective-story writers and that she thus attracts attention in a field which is mostly on a sub-literary level. In any serious department of fiction, her writing would not appear to have any distinction at all." (*New Yorker*, January 20, 1945.) Wilson's strictures, of course, apply even more to the less literary practitioners—Margery Allingham, Ngaio Marsh, Agatha Christie, &c.

I shall quote a paragraph from B. M. Trevelyan's *English Social History* (p. 582, Eng. ed., 1944), which not only states the main cultural problem of which the intellectual's attitude to the thriller is an important part, but also leaves no doubt as to what the responsibility of the educated person is. "Our modern system of education . . . has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading, an easy prey to sensations and cheap appeals. Consequently both literature and journalism have been to a large extent debased since 1870, because they now cater for millions of half-educated and quarter-educated people whose forbears, not being able to read at all, were not the patrons of books. *The small highly educated class no longer sets the standard to the extent that it used to do, and tends to adopt the standards of the majority* (my italics). If the lower forms of literature and journalism do not completely devour the higher, it will be due to improved secondary and higher education forming a sufficiently large class to perpetuate a demand for things worth reading."

UNDER THE BRIDGE

By DAN DAVIN.



BLACK OPAQUE, and in hundreds they interposed their darkness between us and the smiling Cretan sky, shattered the summer's peace with the death they carried, slew its silence with the roar of their engines and the punctuated thunder of the bombs. Each explosion overtook its predecessor's echo, and merged with it to make a perpetual rumble in the hills.

Sometimes a shadow would pass directly over us, swiftly, with a flitting bat-like quality. The drone increased to a roar, and the plane would follow, bullets streaming with the indiscriminating prodigality of rain. Like rain on a gusty day. How long since I had seen and felt rain, refreshing rain not deadly, from grey, unhurrying homely skies not this lethal metallic rain.

Our hill overlooked the village on its left, on the right front the sea. The sea, smooth and untroubled, its calm a promise of permanence when this tumult should be silent, road home to the lands of rain. Crouched under the lee of the rock, nostalgia gripped me like a cramp, nostalgia for the past or for the future. Anything to be out of this moment where we were held by the slow, maddening pace of time. But not for long this mutiny of the heart. Madness to venture hopes on such a sea, to commit oneself to any-

thing but a prudent despair. Try to save your life certainly, but within the bounds of decency and dignity. And not expect to save it. Fighting was easier, dourer in despair.

Nothing much to do till the air quietened down a bit. There might be more parachutists to follow soon, the concentration was so fierce. But no; it was the town that was getting it this time. Our share was only the overflow. They were solacing themselves for their reverses on the ground in an orgy of undirected destruction, an orgasm of rage and inflicted terror. Clouds of dust and smoke rose tranquilly, unfolding and expanding with leisure of time itself from crumpled homes and ruined walls. Flames groped up into the afternoon their red transparent to the day and then, as their mounting impetus declined, filmy and water-coloured but still blood-shot.

Just outside the village where the last houses straggled like lost children the road bridged a gully. I was watching the bridge. During raids the people sheltered under it. We had warned them to go away, not to wait. They were obstinate, they would not leave their homes. We told them the bridge would probably be hit, was a military objective, but the mere physical fact of its shelter, its mere bulk blinded them to its danger. They continued to go there.

That would have been bad enough. But now we all had a personal interest there as well. Angela and her grandmother would be there too. And Angela had somehow succeeded in making herself real to us in a way civilians are not usually real. They didn't even belong to the town, but had come down from their village in the hills. They used to help us with food sometimes and do the washing. There was something about Angela's smiling freshness, the beauty of her teeth and hands which made everything she did for us seem better than if some one else had done it. Seeing her

made you notice how good the weather was, and when you looked at the sea you would see how blue it was and the snow on the mountains inland would strike you in all its cold remote whiteness for it seemed the first time. On the old, leisurely standard I would have had time to fancy myself in love with Angela.

From where I was I could see the bridge perfectly. The gully ran out from the foot of our hill and in a straight line away from us till it passed under the road. You could not distinguish individuals. But you could see them praying. They were all kneeling under it, the women and the children and the very old men. You could see them praying, making the sign of the Cross over and over again. Their fear was erect and dignified. For the hundredth time I admired the bravery of these Cretans, their steadfastness. Angela and her grandmother would be there, too, like the others afraid, as who would not be like them, calm and accepting, with a proviso of reserved revenge.

I felt so close to them that I was with them. I almost blessed myself, too, when they did. It was like the family rosary of long ago. But the devil "who wanders through the world to the ruin of souls" sought bodies, too. He was real and present. He was death, travelling with every bullet now broadcast from the air and guiding too haphazard chance, now sped from the cool intent of the sniper's eye.

In spite of the intenseness of my presence with them I was aware, too, of the planes, could see them as one after another detached from the intricately weaving group and swept low with a rising roar over the prostrate village.

They would have been better off spread along the gully. But they might have a chance. The German hadn't yet bombed any bridges to my knowledge. Saving them for himself. But this was a side road. It wouldn't matter much to him. And to-day he didn't seem to care much where he dropped them; he was out to terrorize. By now the town couldn't be much more than a chaff of mortar and rubble among drunken walls.

From over the centre of the town a bomber came sailing out towards the bridge. Slowly, very slowly. Above the outskirts they began to drop, swift and glistening where the light caught them. I watched them. The first struck the edge of the town. A series of explosions among the scattered houses. I heard them only. I was watching the last. I don't think he particularly meant to hit the bridge. But it disappeared. The whole scene disappeared. It was as if I had become blind with smoke and dust instead of darkness.

I waited for it to clear. For reality to reassemble. The cloud settled into the grey-green olives on either side of the gully. The bridge was still standing. The bomb had fallen in the gully on the far side. I began to breathe again. And then I saw that the group had changed. They were no longer kneeling. Their small dark knot had opened out like a flower. There were shapes scattered in a semicircle this side of the bridge, still. The bomb blast must have travelled along the gully like an express train through a cutting. Still, I thought at first; but after a while I seemed to discern movement. It was not a movement of whole bodies, a stirring of limbs rather, of extremities, faint and painful like the movements of a crushed insect whose antennæ still grope out pitifully with a hopeless, gallant wavering to life.

This was the bare slope of the hill. The red clay showed through the thin soil and the olives were few, thickening only at the bottom. And the planes were as active as ever. It was impossible to get down. And anyhow we had a position to hold.

Afternoon became evening since time moved even in that eternity. And day diminished into dusk. The racket slackened. Only an occasional rifle shot or burst of machine-gun reminded the twilight silence of its brief tenure. Silence like us and them was normal.

I told the others I was going down. They were to cover me across the open patch. I slipped out from cover, and, holding the Tommy-gun, bolted for the olives. No firing, no vicious swish of bullets. I made my way through the

olives, along the lip of the gully. The dusk was deeper in the olives. The hill held its bulk before the sun.

As I approached the bridge I hesitated. I knew what I was going to see. And there had been so much of it in these last days. I stopped and listened. Not a sound. That eternal, suffering grey of the olives, the agony immobilized of their gnarled trunks anticipated and accentuated what must be in the gully. The silence, the patient silence and the dusk, but mostly the silence, were too much. It was silence of mangled bodies, a silence of negation and death. There was no life in the gully. Pain, perhaps, frozen into immobility, but no life. If I should see it as well, bodies caparisoned in all the bloody trappings of a violent death, blood and grotesque distortions of the body's familiar pattern, it would be too much. Not as if it were new. The very familiarity of the distortion, the blasphemy of it, would prove final. I did not want to see any more. I did not want to see Angela, her grandmother,

others I had known. Or if I did see them and did not recognize them.

But perhaps there was something one could do. I listened again. Not a groan or sigh. There was much to do, much fighting yet. One must fight for one's sanity as well as one's life. I hesitated. In sudden horror I knew there was something else dragging me to the edge. Appetite for frightfulness as well as revulsion. Death squatted within the hollow like a presence, its emanation came up, grisly, dragging at me. I felt the hair on the back of my head stiffen. I took two steps forward. My eyes saw but my brain would not see. I turned and ran.

At the edge of the olives I halted. My knees were like jelly, with a hot trembling. I waited. Then ran again across, up over the bare slope. It was with relief I heard the bullets searing their tunnel through the air. At the rock I turned and dropped into cover, a soldier again. And the bridge and the gully of bodies waited in my memory.

DAN DAVIN—A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The short story, *Under the Bridge*, is reprinted from the Penguin New Writing, No. 13, and was written by Daniel Marcus Davin, a New-Zealander. A drawing of him is reproduced on Page 11. A novel, *Cliffs of Fall*, written by Dan Davin in 1939, was published in May of this year; several of the more responsible English journals reviewed it critically, but not unfavourably. Comparing the theme of this "remarkable first novel" with Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, the *Spectator* commented that "since execution is not equal to conception, *Cliffs of Fall* is a failure, but a brilliant one, for the author has passion, a quality which is more rare and more valuable than competence"; "... in its final section nearly reaches great heights of poetic imagination"; "The author has some of the matter-of-fact brilliance which makes the novels of Graham Greene so impressive, he too can depict the seedy and the violent in terms which do not depend on mere realism."

"Mr. Davin's book," *The New Statesman and Nation* said, "is a failure, as certainly as it is an honourable failure" (differing from "the majority of first novels by talented young men [which] are dishonourable successes"). Commenting on Mr. Davin's "admirably courageous" choice of treatment the reviewer considers the author "will go far."

Dan Davin, born in 1913 in Invercargill, left New Zealand in 1936 as a Rhodes Scholar; he was at Balliol College, Oxford, until 1939. During the war he served with 2 N.Z.E.F., fought through the campaigns of Greece and Crete (when he was wounded), and later rose to the rank of major. Early this year he was released to take up a position with the Oxford University Press. In 1939 he married a New-Zealander, Miss Winifred Gonley, and they have two children. He has contributed poetry and prose to English periodicals.



By A. E. MERCER.

TO EVERY one who borrows books from A.E.W.S. or E.R.S. libraries "New Zealand Country Library Service" is a familiar label. The Country Library Service has been in existence for more than seven years. This article tells you what it is and what it does.

Remote in the heart of the Lewis Pass country is Maruia, a farming district where burnt-out trees and unprofitable land depress the tourist. It has a box-like post-office and a tiny school. A handful of small-farmers, their wives and families, make up the meagre population. But Maruia has its public library—seventy-five Country Library Service books on rough shelves behind the post-office counter. The postmistress, who is also the librarian, will tell you that the Maruia Public Library has about thirty subscribers. If you ask her which are the most popular books in the library at the moment she will point to these:—

Daylight on Saturday. J. B. Priestley.
Mother Russia. Maurice Hindus.
Surgeon's Symphony. George Sava.
Random Harvest. James Hilton.
Curtain Rises. Quentin Reynolds.
Also the Hills. Francis Parkinson
 Keyes.

Gideon Planish. Sinclair Lewis.

These are the books, or some of them, for which city people are standing in queues. In Maruia they have read them and are sitting on logs waiting for more.

At Cheviot there are more people, more books, and more librarians, for Cheviot is a larger township with several stores and rich farm lands round it. The

Cheviot Public Library, like Maruia typical of so many others, has one hundred members. It is co-operative, with ten voluntary librarians, two secretaries, a president, and a patron. When the Country Library Service book-van arrives to change the 125 books on loan to this library the selection is done by the postmaster, two or three farmers' wives, a school-teacher or two, and a young man who works on the roads.

Not many years ago the small public libraries like Maruia and Cheviot were fighting a losing battle for their existence. They had no money and few books. Keeping them going with a limited mediocre stock was a heart-breaking job for those who were enthusiastic enough to try it. But in 1938 the Country Library Service began the process of resuscitation. By the simple yet far-reaching method of giving mobility to its stock, putting its books on wheels and moving them from one library to another, the C.L.S., as it is best known, has saved the lives of most of New Zealand's small country libraries and has made life much easier for the big ones. In some ways the relationship between the C.L.S. and the libraries which it serves is comparable with an irrigation scheme. Instead of setting up its own ineffectual little water-works, each village and country town takes a lead from the main stream of C.L.S. stock which comes flowing over the land in a planned network. Maruia and Cheviot, not to mention Kerikeri, Dove-dale, Tirau, Weka Weka, Little River, Moana, Kurow, Athol, and many others,

are small independent subscription libraries managed by local committees. Service to these libraries is on a hire basis with a low annual charge. Five hundred of them are now being served by the C.L.S., which has 30,000 books on loan to them.

The refreshing influence of C.L.S. irrigation is perhaps most evident in the free public libraries maintained by borough councils, town boards, and other local authorities. For the C.L.S. has not only books, but ideas. One of them, possibly the most important, is that public libraries to be really effective should be free libraries. Free service at the local library removes the final obstruction between the central source of supply and the reader. Proof of the great advantages free libraries have over subscription libraries can be found in any or all of the fifty-six free public libraries now being supplied by the C.L.S. A year or two ago the Kaiapoi Public Library, to take an example, was poor. It had a great collection of out-dated, dusty volumes, and only forty subscribers. To-day, with C.L.S. methods in practice and C.L.S. books on its shelves, it is an effective free library giving excellent service to more than eight hundred active borrowers. Much the same story can be told of the libraries in Motueka, Morrinsville, Waimate, Hawera, Roxburgh, Maitua, Taihape, Greymouth, Te Aroha, Thames, and Tauranga, to mention only a few. The local authorities in all these places have accepted the idea of free library service for local residents, and the C.L.S. aid which goes with it. From these libraries 120,000 people get their books and enjoy facilities for reading, both popular and serious, as good as they could get anywhere.

Every one knows that the free library has come to stay. In Motueka, as in Morrinsville, the local library is an accepted factor in the life of the town. With the post-office, the bank, the picture-theatre, and the pubs, it is one of the institutions round which life moves. The appointment of a new librarian concerns everybody, and any mention of library matters at the monthly meeting of the borough council immediately finds its place as a matter of interest in the

local newspaper. To the people in country towns the connection between the local library and the C.L.S. is a bit vague. A few of them know that the C.L.S. lends books to the library free, the number being based on population, provided the library is itself free and is well managed. But almost all of them know that the C.L.S. book-van comes twice a year to change the books. All C.L.S. books on loan to both subscription libraries, like Maruia and Cheviot, and free libraries like Rangiora and Rotorua, are changed regularly by the now familiar book-vans. Painted an unobtrusive grey and not exactly beautiful to look at, these wagons—the north van and the south van—hammer out their 4,000 mile circuits twice a year with punctuality.



In the C.L.S. it is the book-van which does the front-line work. But as all the Army knows, the front-line work is only half the story. The staff work of C.L.S. is done in the headquarters at Wellington where batteries of catalogue drawers, filing cabinets, trays of cards, and many thousands of books give the appearance not so much of a library as of a library for libraries. The C.L.S. is a wholesale concern rather than retail. It helps New Zealand libraries, especially those in the country, to do their job. And the job of the public libraries goes much further than providing books and papers for general reading. In this country there are a million people who want books for one purpose or another. So in the C.L.S. the general and popular reading material

is trundled by book-van from library to library. But the more specialized needs of the professions, the various industries, the artists, and the scientists of one kind or another are looked after by the C.L.S. Request and Information Service is at headquarters. Working by post from Wellington the request service handles more than 10,000 applications each year for special books or for books on special subjects. ANY SUBJECT—ANY BOOK is the official boast, and mostly it is carried out. Requests from the local libraries are received daily for books and information on many topics, anything from the manufacture of elastic to the pedigree of racehorses. Interior decorating; woodwork and cabinetmaking; poultry-keeping, backyard and commercial; beekeeping; dressmaking and tailoring; housing and town planning, are a few of the more regular request subjects. The headquarters collection of the C.L.S. from which books are taken to meet requests is extensive, modern, and ever-increasing. Requests which the C.L.S. is not able to handle are usually met by borrowing from a city or a university library. Under the wing of the New Zealand Library Association and with the Country Library Service most of the larger libraries in the Dominion now regularly lend and borrow informa-



tional books. By simply agreeing to pool their resources for the benefit of serious readers wherever they live, the major libraries have greatly increased their collective effectiveness. This entails much bibliographical and reference work, most of which is done at C.L.S. headquarters. The results of this come as a great boon not only to the country people, but also to those who live in the cities. It is a queer but justifiable thought that, thanks largely to the Country Library Service, a city man is now-a-days as well off for reference and informational books as the country man. The educational and reference stock of the Country Library Service, though primarily for the use of country libraries, is also available for city libraries.

Providing for the book needs of the three-quarters of a million people who live in New Zealand's country districts and country towns is a work which is not achieved by any one method. Mostly the C.L.S. lends its books and its advice to public libraries, but it is by no means unmindful of the individuals who cannot reasonably belong to public libraries. Free postal service is given to more than five hundred persons living in isolated districts. Many a lighthouse-keeper and many a high-country shepherd are grateful for this regular supply of first-rate literature. Small groups of readers in districts too remote even for a C.L.S. van to reach are supplied with a special hamper service. Hampers containing a mixed bag of twenty-five books circulate from one group to another. Glenorchy and Whakaangiangi may be some distance from the G.P.O., but the people there want books, and they get them. There is also the Schools Section of the Country Library Service. The Country Library Service is the core of our national library organization, having as its aim *books for libraries and libraries for every one*. You use it now, in the army, the navy, or the air force, in New Zealand or overseas. You will be able to use it when you get back.



shell SHOCK

BY SGT. J. A. EVANS

IN the beginning the foxholes we dug in the half-cultivated area behind the village were really only a kind of shallow, muddy grave. A thing we could never explain was that the crabs thought they were dug for them. After dark it seemed that crabs of all sizes for chains round were trekking over the wet leaves towards them. They made every one jumpy with their rustling. Still, when the ack-ack began to woof overhead, and specially if a bit of shrapnel whistled down, we'd have jumped into a pit of writhing snakes. If you had a couple of crabs down with you, they'd wander round scratching at the sides of the hole as they tried to clamber up. Eventually we slung a bit of a roof over the hole, just leaves and dirt and stakes. I don't suppose it would have stopped anything, but it gave us what one of the officers called "psychological protection." One night when Mac and I had got down in a hurry, a crab dropped from the roof on to the back of his shirt, and clung there. Mac is nothing if not excitable, so for a while it was as though I were sharing that hole with a wild bull. It was pretty hard to account for the purpose of providence when those crabs were fashioned. They were smelly and repulsive to look at, and lived all their lives in the mud, and dragged filthy shells round on their backs.

Some weeks later we were breathing more freely, and one of the hobbies which we took on to pass the time was shell-collecting. It started when the Natives traded some with us for little odds and ends. The shells here were all new to us, and many of them were very attractive. We used to collect them in

the shallow water inside the reef, with live fish in them, because dead ones washed up empty on the shore didn't have the same glossy surface. The technique was to leave these shells out on the ground where the ants were, and they'd clean them out in a few days. Then they would be boiled up in soapy water, and you'd have a clean shell with a fine lustre.

Once Mac had a field-day out in the water, and came in with half a dozen real beauties. There was one big one which was jet black round the edge, and it faded away to a pure light orange on top. It had a lovely sheen, and the Natives chattered among themselves about it, and one said to Mac, "Very rare shell." He was very pleased with them, and put them out on a board back in the bush where the ants would go to work on them. Some days later he went very crook. He took us to see where he had put his shells. Not one of his beauties was left, but lying around the board were a few dirty old ones. He said pretty fiercely, "That's adding insult to injury! I didn't think there was anyone in the company low enough to pinch a fellow's shells, but to leave these stinkers in their place is rubbing the dirt in." He was so upset over losing his orange one that he nearly cried with rage. Certainly the fellow who ratted them must have had a wierd sense of humour.

Mac soon had a diversion, though—a beer issue arrived. In his wisdom the Major let it out in dribbles, a couple of bottles at a time. However, by a supreme effort of will-power Mac saved all his up until he had the whole issue intact. We kept a fair bit, too, then one

night we all went on the bash, and our's was a noisy tent. We were all very happy and it wasn't long before Mac got sentimental, and wanted to sing. The highlight was always his rendering of "The Easter Parade." He'd stand up, perspiring freely, and would practically talk the song, going very slowly, with lots of pauses, and great emphasis. He fancied himself a lot with that song, so we'd always applaud loudly, and he'd bow gravely. We got round to it this evening, and Mac hadn't been going long, at the far end of the tent, with a bottle in one hand, when Jim and I spotted it together. On the floor just inside the door, showing up very distinctly in the light of the Coleman, was Mac's orange shell!

We weren't nearly as merry as Mac, but we both thought that we were seeing things. It moved a little, then began to sidle in, and a claw showed. In a flash we realized who were the humourists who had pinched the shells. Some crabs with shells which were feeling tight had found Mac's glossy ones, and thought they were just what the doctor ordered. They had swapped over smartly.

Mac was still in the full flood of his song. "Oh, in her Easter bonnet" . . .

he gave a dramatic sweep of the arm. At that moment he froze—he'd seen the shell creeping towards him. He forgot about the Easter parade, and sat down on his cot, and wiped some of the sweat off his face. Then he said, "Jim, I don't feel so good. You boys carry on, but I think I'll lie down for a while." He got in his net and turned his back to the light, and I don't think he budged until morning.

Well, we grabbed the shell, and that was one crab which didn't have to worry about the accommodation shortage any longer. We polished the shell up, and put it on top of Mac's ration-case tallboy. All of us were very surprised when he found it in the morning, but we noticed that he didn't seem so very startled himself. He was puzzled, but he didn't even seem to suspect us of anything. Goodness knows how he accounted for it to himself, but he looked like a man who has had a solemn, final warning. He never discussed it much, but he did remark casually, "I think I remember some kind of dream about it coming back."

We noticed, though, that for a long time after he didn't accumulate his beer, but just drank it as it came.

"FLOWERS THAT BLOOM IN THE PRING"

"Cairo had a sort of spring, but not the real thing," said Major R. A. Usborne in a broadcast talk. "I found the point rather well made for me when, in what passed for the spring of 1944, I bought in one of the bookshops there a paper-bound anthology called *Poetry of our Times*. It had been printed in Cairo, and I am convinced that the proofs thereof were corrected at the time of 'the flap' in Cairo, those harassed days when Rommel was at Alamein, and he was thought likely to become an honorary member of the Turf Club in Cairo at any moment. The first sentence of the introduction of this collection says: 'An anthology invariably means by definition a choice, and in consequence omission . . . ' But the omission which startled me above all in this carelessly printed book, and later made me very happy, was the inadvertent omission of the 's' in spring in the first line of a piece by Gerard Manley Hopkins. The Cairo reading of this line was 'Nothing is so beautiful as pring.'

"Pring's good. There were many other startling misprints in the book. But 'pring' pleased me most. Pring; pring song; pring in the air; pringtime, the only pretty ring time; yet, ah that pring should vanish with the rose . . . The truth is, of course, that Cairo really has no spring: only pring. Pring is the season that hits Cairo in February, and dissolves into summer about the end of March. In Cairo, in the pring, the first fly comes back, and you treat him as an infuriating individual, to be chased and killed; whereas, come May, he is one of a crowd, and you languidly wave a fly-whisk at him. In pring the Gezira swimming-pool looks very clean, and you would swim in it if it were only a little warmer out of the sun. In the pring you kick your British warm off your bed at midnight, and wake up shivering, to grope for it, at 5 a.m. In the pring the Cairo kites snicker to each other more loudly. Yes, pring is a very definite Cairo season, and, if one likes it at all, it is only because it is warmer than winter and cooler than summer."—*The Listener, England.*



From "Letter to a Soldier" by H. L. HEATLEY. (Part 2.)

THIS AFTERNOON we are having a concert on the boat deck. People are sitting everywhere, on the deck, on rafts, in odd chairs, on the hatchway, straining for a view round ventilators and stanchions and bollards and booms and winches, straining to hear performers through a hopelessly inefficient loud-speaker system.

The stage is set near the main mast right at the aft end of the boat deck, so that the largest part of the audience, troops clinging to every point in the aft well-deck area, may see and hear.

It is a hot afternoon with a breeze strong enough to roughen the surface of the sea, so that the sun is reflected in countless sparkling points of light. The sky is still blue, edged with horizon-long, evenly banked clouds dappled white and grey.

The convoy moves on placidly.

Master of Ceremonies, opening the concert, is about to win the favour of all other ranks. "A Yank, a Tommy, and a Kiwi meet in a bar, and the talk, as usual, gets around to shop," he is saying. "As usual, too, the Yank is the first to set the ball rolling, bragging: 'We have tough officers. The other day one of our officers went out on patrol and had his brains and his guts shot out. But the M.O. put a bandage around his head and another around his stomach and he was on parade the next morning'. 'That's

nothing', said the Tommy. 'Fairly recently one of our officers had his brains and guts shot out, but they put zip-fasteners on him and he was on parade next morning'. 'Well', said the New-Zealander, 'we have officers with no brains and no guts and they're on parade every morning.'"

Master of Ceremonies is cheered by the other ranks, and introduces a four-piece, drumless orchestra. Vocalists follow, but "An Old Fashioned House," "The Road To Mandalay," and other songs are flattened in the vast amphitheatre of sky and sea; notes and words are lost in immensity. I am reminded of a shepherd singing in the hills a mile away on a clear summer evening "The Hills Of Home," as a nursing sister is singing now.

The torrid sun creeps under the canvas awning as the cyclostyled community song sheets are handed out. Not a chord is heard from the Trojan piano dragged from the officers lounge, but the songs are old and familiar as comrades of desert days and the green hills and olive trees of Italy. All seem to know the words of "Just a Boosey Private", and the tune "Lili Marlene," of course, is as familiar as any tune is likely to be. "Won't You Take Us Home," again plagiarizing the German soldier's torch song, means nothing now, but it is not so long since there were wishes aplenty in the vigour of the words.

Aldis lamps are busy between Senior Officer Escort and this, the convoy commodore's ship, and between this and the other vessels. The siren gives two nerve-jumping whoops and the formation makes a 15 degrees turn. The wind has increased, the clouds on the horizon ahead have turned blacker. The singing goes on.

"Haere Ra," favourite of messes, bivvy-tented areas, and truck movements, has significance now. ". . . Soon you'll be sailing far across the sea . . . You'll find me waiting there." And a verse of the song of the islands is not nostalgic as it used to be, but instead is full of promise :—

O'er the ocean your Island home is calling,
Happy country where roses bloom in splendour.
Oh, if I could but journey there beside you,
Then for ever my heart would sing in rapture.

Sentimental ?

Yes.

But the ship's bow is pointed south-east and to-day we seem to be so very, very much nearer home.

Sunday

A cool southerly wind whips rainbow spray from a white-splashed, Reckitt's blue sea. It is a day for slacks, singlets, and sweaters, and comes abruptly on four days of rough weather, four stifling days in the confinement of closed ports.

It is Sunday. A pleasant day. Out on the boat deck one almost catches the atmosphere of a lazy peacetime cruise.

A church service is in progress in the officers lounge. "Onward, Christian soldiers, Onward as to war . . ." There is a good attendance and the familiar hymn comes strongly through the open window. It occurs to me that "Onward, Christian soldiers, Onward as from war," would be more appropriate to this particular service until I read a paragraph in the day's radio news bulletin.

"After a chase lasting one week, units of the Royal Navy and the Royal Indian Navy have sunk a Japanese submarine in the Indian Ocean. The submarine was sunk by H.M.S. *Godavari*."

We have been in the Indian Ocean for two weeks. We are still in it. How we take our safety for granted ! What bliss is our ignorance !

The padre is speaking. ". . . and Christ told his disciples to go throughout the world. So should we go throughout our world with the Gospel . . ."



Audience.

Farewell to Escort

The ponderous voice of the ship's master comes heavily over the loud-speakers. "At approximately seventeen-thirty hours . . . that is to say, at half-past five . . . the Senior Officer Escort will close this ship. The escort is leaving us on its long return voyage and I propose, as commodore of this convoy, to say a few words of thanks to Senior Officer Escort for having brought us safely thus far. If troops are so inclined they may express their thanks to the escort by giving three cheers. That is all."

We have steamed steadily southward and night comes more quickly. It is darkening at 5.30. An extremely cool breeze brings a threat of rain from mounting leaden clouds. But officers, nursing sisters, W.A.A.Cs, and men have climbed on to hatchways and rigging and are lining the rails. It will be an event to see that tiny escort "close this ship," to see it as something nearer, more potent, than a distant grey shape out ahead and on the flank of the convoy.

All eyes are on the Senior Officer Escort's ship as, at precisely 5.30, it turns slowly in the broken sea, skirts the star-board troopship, and slowly turns toward our vessel. The convoy has reduced

speed until we appear to have bare steerage way. The tiny frigate pushes her nose into the cold grey seas, then climbs them swiftly. We can see her crew lining the rails, two or three figures on the miniature bridge representing officers and signalmen. How small this escort is! Deadly depth charges are poised along its stern rails; small calibre, almost innocuous guns are trained ahead, shrouded in canvas coats. Gradually the margin between the vessels closes. The diminutive warship has the effect of transforming this ship into a leviathan by comparison. We lumber, while the frigate (fondly and so confidently imagined by most to be a destroyer) skirts and skates, showing her green forefoot and then the red-ochred stern plates.

The convoy commodore is standing within view on the bridge. He has a microphone to his lips, and through this and the loud-hailer says, "Good evening to you." Does the Senior Officer Escort hear? Our captain says again, "Good evening to you." And then a young clear English voice, almost straight from the B.B.C., says, "Good evening, sir." The "sir" is a courtesy. Because of his position the Senior Officer Escort, in this case, I think, judging by the size of his flagship, a Lieutenant R.N., or perhaps a Lieutenant-Commander R.N.V.R., is in command of the convoy, completely responsible for it. But he is leaving us now that we are through the danger area.

"As captain of this ship and commodore of the convoy," says the master, "I want to say 'Thank you' for bringing us safely under your wing so far. On behalf of the convoy, too, I wish you *bon voyage* on your long trip back across these waters."

"Thank you, sir," says the young voice from the bridge of the escort. "I would like to wish you a safe landfall and a welcome at your destination that you deserve."

This last is meant for the troops, who, quick to recognize it, break into cheers. For a minute or two the vessels continue to ride together. Then the midget warship falls slowly away, turns her bow from us, and, followed by her sister ship from the port flank, heads into the dark horizon astern.

The Last Lap

This ship has a fault, responsibility for which lies with its architects. It may steam at a steady so-many knots, completely satisfying its captain and chief engineer and the naval authorities who plot its whereabouts from day to day, but it cannot steam fast enough. It is equipped with everything but the engines to drive it at 500 knots. Deplorable lack of initiative on the part of its designers!

We are becoming impatient, and impatience over the last day or two has been translated into greater mileage of paced deck than the total logged on the voyage so far. Perhaps the grey, bleak weather has something to do with it? Definitely did that two and a half days' stay at Melbourne contribute towards it. A week-end in Victoria's capital, delightful as a relief from four tedious weeks at sea, formed too much of a brake on our steady progress homewards. To leave the port, even though we were able the better to stand on shore-stretched legs, was too much like starting the voyage afresh, and Aotearoa, though much nearer geographically, had receded a little in the long-nurtured vision of imagination.

But there was a sheer physical pleasure in being able to walk the wide streets and a mental exhilaration in hearing English spoken instead of the cosmopolitan babble to which we had been accustomed for so long. It may read



Inspection.

as an exaggerated acknowledgment of fortune, but the mere fact of listening to the barber briefly snipping away at Australasian racing history and the days' prospects at Mentone was a degree of joy.

But the really simple act with the proportions of a win in the Irish Sweepstake was to hold and read a newspaper. The Anglo-Egyptian news sheets familiar in Middle East days and the Service journals forming our daily news medium in Italy were not newspapers: even the least interested of readers and the harshest of critics will concede that. To read a Melbourne newspaper was akin to having sight restored after years of blindness. One might almost allow oneself the ponderous observation that happiness lies in the little things. Let us dwell for a heavenly moment on the sight, texture, and taste of a piece of 3 in. thick sponge cake!

Two grey days of a calm but threatening Tasman. Thirty-one days out from Suez. The work of the ship goes on and those many spare hours are filled in the same fashions, but the more methodical among us are sorting gear and making a preliminary pack. Opportunities, when space is crowded and likely to lead to last-minute chaos, are too good to be missed, they say. Fresh water is turned on all day, hot fresh water, and respite from fatigues and other duties means a chance to do a last limited laundry.

To-day has seen parades, parades, parades; for pay, for rail warrants, for ration coupons—and for telegram forms!

"Two days to New Zealand. We berth in Wellington on Saturday morning," one says, and one's pulse quickens with a nearer, deeper thrill. But to hold a telegraph form, pencil in hand, lifts the heart in bounds of sheer exciting realization. This is true! We *are* going home! We are almost there! This is no long-drawn dream. This telegram will be delivered in a matter of hours. Not long months, nor weary weeks, nor dragging days, but in hours! One is almost paralysed with enthralling prospect. What can one say in such a telegram? Just that. "Only hours now."

This is the only occasion in a lifetime that one may wake from a dream and find it true. This fact of return, so very near accomplishment now, is emerging sharply from the haze of unreality, as an Italian stone-walled mountain village emerges clear-etched against its background of blue and brown and grey when shrouding Appennines mists are dispersed by mountain breezes. To-morrow will be just another day at sea, but we hope that Friday afternoon or evening will bring us a sight of the Long White Cloud.

Oh, to come home to your country
After long years away,
To see the tall shining towers
Rise over the rim of the bay.

P.O.W. INGENUITY

"I think that the finest bit of improvisation was the construction of our first radio receiver. It was built during the latter part of 1941 and was an incredible achievement under the worst possible conditions. Airmen were rarely allowed to work outside the camps owing to a highly developed homing instinct; they were strictly confined and there appeared to be little chance of obtaining radio parts. Frankly, when the idea was first suggested, I considered it impossible, but our radio men believed that a set could be made on the premises, though valves would present a major headache. They were soon working under the direction of Curley Bristow, Davey Young, and Harry Stubbs. Wireless H.Q. appealed for brass coins, tar from the felted roofs, and tin boxes. What we suffered for our unborn wireless set! Even our own lighting system was stripped for wire. Shortly afterwards we heard encouraging reports. The condenser had been completed, and what a condenser! In its construction the trio and their helpers had used a book and sheets of silver paper from the twenty-size cigarette packets—these were inserted between the pages of the book and the whole boiled in grease. I am no radio technician, but I was and still am impressed by the ingenuity of men who can produce a radio condenser—without tools—from a book, silver paper, grease, and old wire. We acquired the valves and the earphone, you might say, dishonestly. At least, they were stolen: the valves from a radio shop in a nearby town; and Bristow, in a moment of brilliance, removed the works of the Defence Officer's telephone"—Warrant Officer A. J. Dixon, in *The Listener*.

MAKING JAPAN OVER

By T. A. Bisson, in the *New Republic*, May 28, 1945

A CURIOUS DICHOTOMY has prevailed in the traditional American outlook on Japan. In one mental compartment we have nurtured a set of dislikes and fears: an ingrained concern over Japanese militarism and expansionism, an easily stimulated reaction against the competition of cheap Japanese goods. Tucked away in another compartment has existed a sort of guilty conscience. Composed in part of a general belief in Japan's supposed economic handicaps, skilfully fostered by the "over-population" thesis of Japanese propaganda, it was also associated with a more legitimate sympathy for the difficult living conditions of the Japanese people. Since these inconsistencies of attitude were walled off in separate compartments, the necessity for reconciling them did not arise. Even the war does not seem to have given us a more inclusive and integrated concept of the problem we face in dealing with Japan. We have yet to visualize the ruthless conqueror, the intense competitor, and the poverty-stricken populace as natural products of a complex social system which has its own inner logic.

This failure, or perhaps unwillingness, to look into the entity we label "Japan" carries with it inevitable penalties. It leaves us with no frame of reference within which to set proposed policies and gauge their effects. Without such a frame of reference, controversy over a "hard" or "soft" peace is the most futile of exercises. Shall we abolish Japanese industry completely, or shall we keep it in whole or in part? Shall we enforce strict controls on Japanese trade and industry indefinitely, or for a limited term? Questions such as these cannot be answered *in vacuo*. Substance is given only as they are related to the kind of social order which develops in post-war Japan. If it is the old order, or a masked replica of it, both military and economic controls must be maintained indefinitely. Enforcement of these controls will impose a continuing burden on the world security

organization, but they can hardly be relaxed without long-term, even if not immediate, risks. On the other hand, if a new democratic order rises in Japan, the road to economic freedom and to the nation's full association in the world community can be cleared without undue delay. The vital policy decision, in the first instance, will thus be a political one.

Particular circumstances existing at the end of the war will affect this decision. An early unconditional surrender would help Japan's present ruling groups to salvage the essentials of their oligarchic regime. *Per contra*, the emergence of a strong, popular resistance movement would provide the basis for a new democratic order. But the prime responsibility will still rest with the occupying powers. They can welcome or frown upon liberal popular forces, or even positively help them to develop strength if it is lacking. They can also deliberately permit or assist so-called "moderate" elements from the old ruling circle to organize the first post-war Government.

Not without political significance is the fact that official propaganda activity which must hew to a line set by the State Department, carefully limits its attention to the "militarists." In this controlled propaganda campaign, the Emperor and the Court circle are immune from attack. So also are the business groups, the party leaders, and the bureaucrats. Strangely enough, the political complexion of the Suzuki Cabinet exactly corresponds to this division, *in the reverse sense*. The "militarists" are in the back seat. The Cabinet is dominated by a Court-Navy-bureaucrat-business coalition, with generally "moderate" political antecedents. It is just this coalition which might engineer a surrender with the hope of being able to continue in power after the war. The professional Army leadership, like the Reichswehr in Germany, would also be inclined to follow a line that holds out the possibility of a future revival, even at the cost of temporary eclipse. Japan's

military-naval leaders know that they are a necessary adjunct of the old regime, which has before this assumed for long periods the mask of "moderation" and pseudo-liberalism.

These facts point to a more fundamental aspect of the Japanese social structure. They refute a currently fashionable oversimplification that the "militarists" are the dominant political force in Japanese society. Actually, the key feature of Japan's social order lies in the special relationship which obtains between the monopolists (Zaibatsu) and the landlords. In the countryside the large holdings of some 3,500 big landlords (including the Emperor) stand out above the meagre plots of more than 5,000,000 tenant and small-owner farm households. In the big cities a dozen Zaibatsu concerns and semi-State monopolies (in which the Emperor holds large blocks of shares) dominate the banking, industrial, and commercial life of the country. The nexus between Zaibatsu and landlords is formed by the 30,000,000 poverty-stricken farmers, who constitute an inexhaustible reservoir of cheap labour. Even the lowest wage in mine or factory has averaged better than the livelihood in rural areas, which has often dipped toward famine conditions. Professor Shirosi Nasu, one of the foremost students of Japan's agrarian problems, describes the situation in these terms:—

"Existence of up-to-date factories with high technical efficiency side by side with millions of small farms amply supplying these factories with skilful but low-wage man-power constitutes the backbone of the national economy of Japan. This relationship is made possible by the fact that the birth rate of the rural population is higher than that of the urban population."

But this "relationship" has most important effects. It condemns the mass of the Japanese people—the farmers and workers—to a chronic poverty. It stunts the home market, forcing the export of 30 and 40 per cent. of total production (factory and small-scale industry) in normal years. The relative paucity of local natural resources—which however, can easily be overstressed—accentuates the difficulty. By necessity an intensive

drive for foreign trade has characterized Japan's economy throughout this century. The cheap labour, the technical efficiency of modern factories, and the severe exploitation of small-scale industry propel Japanese goods into foreign markets with great competitive force, but this misshapen economic structure is peculiarly dependant on the vicissitudes of the world economy. Economic security even for the Zaibatsu-landlord combination, not to mention the people, is a will-o'-the-wisp. An alternative is sought in territorial expansion—the natural and, indeed, inexorable outcome of the whole system.

Around the Zaibatsu-landlord core—the true essence of modern Japan—are grouped all the other elements of the ruling caste. Emperor worship, as an ideological instrument, is designed first to lead the mass of the people to accept without protest their miserable economic lot, and only secondarily to provide divine sanction for conquest. The military still wield their ruthless feudal sword, but in answer to the dictates of an unstable economy geared both to the modern machine and the tenant farmer's rice plot. A class of bureaucrats, larger even than the German professional Civil Service, performs the essential administrative tasks. Party leaders grace the pseudo-parliamentary facade of the regime, which is an unlimited oligarchy in actual content. The Emperor unites in himself all the diverse aspects of the oligarchy. He is the high priest of a tribal religion. But he is also the biggest landlord, a leading member of the Zaibatsu, the supreme head of the State, and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy.

In this highly complex organism each member functions in relation to the others, but the whole being has an essential vitality of its own. Assume, now, the post-war policy which lops off one limb—the "militarists." The Emperor remains; so also the bureaucracy, as well as the Zaibatsu and landlords. One limb is removed, but the soul, the hands and brain, and the body and heart are left. Is it logical to expect that the organism will thereafter take on a new form of life, different in any essential respect from the old? Or must we not

assume that it will devote its efforts to restoring the limb which has been struck off?

Territorial issues will present the first test. In this field the decisive measures will relate not to the strategic islands of the Pacific but to Manchuria, Korea, and Formosa. Maintenance of the old order in Japan, and the eventual restoration of an aggressive Japan's industrial and military strength, will be immensely facilitated if Japanese economic interests in the colonies are protected by the peace terms. There are to-day approximately 320,000 Japanese civilians in Formosa and 750,000 each in Korea and Manchuria. Since the overwhelming majority are administrators or business men, closely linked to the colonial political structure, they seem likely to be swept out by military defeat. The utilities and great industrial enterprises of these colonies are largely State controlled and should be transferred to the Chinese and Korean authorities. Japanese investments in State and private undertakings in the colonies, as in China proper, will provide the sole large and immediately available reparations payments, though quite inadequate to cover the devastation caused by the war. Assuming that these changes are applied in the peace, they will force the repatriation of Japanese civilians, eliminate potential nests of irredentists and fifth-columnists, and thus limit the scope of Japanese under-cover activity in preparation for renewed aggression. Above all, they will force post-war Japan to seek the solution for her economic problem in the homeland, and so stimulate necessary modifications of the old system.

Japan will experience the economic disabilities of defeat primarily in the destruction of industry, transport, and the merchant fleet, in the loss of virtually all foreign investments and assets, and in the disruption of her connections with the world market. Recovery will be slow, unless it is stimulated by the external measures, such as loans, which restored the German economy during the "twenties." But such a programme will carry the same dangers in Japan if it entrenches the old groups in power, even should the oligarchy be temporarily shorn

of its military accessories. To be affected with safety, it would require economic controls adequate to prevent the building of an arms industry, no easy task short of continued military occupation, and the closest economic co-operation among the powers. Even then the world security organization would have to maintain sleepless vigilance. On the other hand, the restoration of Japan's economy is clearly desirable, as much in the interest of the outside world as in those of the Japanese people. Industrial development and foreign trade, moreover, represent a necessary condition for an economically healthy Japan. Can the outside world assist such a development without the necessity of standing perpetually on guard?

Only under one condition: that the stranglehold of the Zaibatsu and landlords on Japan's economic life, and on the welfare and livelihood of the Japanese people, be broken. Agrarian reform constitutes the starting point for the needed changes. The break-up of the landed estates, an essential preliminary in this task, has to be associated with a thorough-going democratization of the agricultural co-operatives, thus far used mainly as an agency of authoritarian regimentation. Through the co-operatives, with which the Japanese farmer has had much experience, can be handled such problems as the purchase of supplies, the marketing of products, and the provision of cheap credit. This programme of agrarian reform, however, cannot be expected to work unless it is associated with measures curbing the great industrial and commercial monopolies. Along with railways, communications, and the electric-power industry, all of which have been already nationalized, the large modern factory enterprises will have to be taken over and operated by the state. Small and middle-scale enterprises, freed of the tribute formerly exacted by the Zaibatsu monopolies, should be able to develop on a much wider and more profitable scale. Previous restrictions on labour organization should be removed. The higher living standards of the farmers and workers, by providing greater domestic purchasing power, will expand the home

market and reduce the pressure to export, even though a large and expanding foreign trade will continue to be a necessity.

Economic reforms of this scope and character, it is obvious, cannot be expected of a government staffed by representatives of the Zaibatsu, the Court circle, and the old bureaucracy. Far-reaching internal political changes, deriving from a government well to the left of centre, must be carried through before economic measures such as these can be instituted. A period of transition, during which the old regime is thoroughly destroyed in the wake of defeat, is a prime necessity if the eventual political outcome is to be favourable. The cardinal mistake would be speedy recognition of a new Government formed by members of the oligarchy, however "moderate" the candidates put forward might appear. This danger will be intensified if the groups now in control should effect an unconditional surrender that enabled them to put through a minimum set of so-called political reforms. We should take warning from the fate of the Weimar Republic, which left the Junkers, the monopolists, and the Reichswehr to function within an outwardly democratic framework.

The principle that free elections be held before a new Government is established and recognized should be adhered to rigidly. Such elections, preferably to a constituent assembly, should be carried through under United Nations auspices, rather than those of a hold-over Japanese regime. The Assembly should draft a new and democratic Constitution, replacing the baldly authoritarian Constitution of 1889. If it decided that an Emperor is to be retained, some guarantee would exist that he would be a genuinely constitutional monarch, functioning under a constitution deriving from the people and not handed down as an imperial "gift." In these political preliminaries, every evidence of popular initiative and resistance to the old order, even if expressed in turbulent forms such as the seizure of landlord's estates, would be the most essential testimony that a new order is not only required, but practical and feasible. Such popular resistance would be the guarantee that a constructive post-war

policy could be speedily implemented in our dealings with Japan. If it should develop and then be crushed because of our taste for "order" and fear of "chaos," the most promising avenue toward the building of a peaceful Far East would thereby be closed.

Internal economic reforms would have provided the essential prerequisite for satisfying the legitimate economic needs of the Japanese people. Elimination of armament expenditure, which has weighed heavily on the Japanese economy for two generations, would furnish large additional resources for post-war reconstruction purposes. To create a fully prosperous Japan, however, substantial assistance from the outside world would still be required. The soundest contribution would be the speedy removal of all unnecessary barriers to the development of Japan's foreign trade. This would be the more necessary since the increased wages going to the Japanese worker would partly reduce the previous competitive advantage of Japanese goods, even though a smaller differential advantage might continue to exist.

Economic assistance to Japan by the United Nations will have to be earned. It will hardly be forthcoming in time to prevent the Japanese people from passing through an onerous post-war transition. The needs of the countries devastated by Japan's war of conquest will have first priority. In the meeting of these needs a toll will almost certainly be levied even on Japan's limited post-war productive resources. When the Japanese people have met this test, and when they have accomplished the needed domestic, social and political readjustments, they will be entitled to turn to the United Nations for those broader measures of economic co-operations which will lay a solid basis for the peace structure in the Pacific.



INVERCARGILL TRUST



A KORERO Report

IT is now almost two years since Invercargill voted for restoration and more than a year since the Invercargill Licensing Trust began its operations. In September, 1943, Invercargill carried restoration by the necessary three-fifths majority; the Service vote was the deciding factor and there were only 46 votes to spare. On July 1, 1944, liquor was sold over the bar within the city area for the first time in 38 years. It was not sold by hotels licensed in the usual way, but on premises owned and operated by the Invercargill Licensing Trust, a body set up by the Government "for the purpose of providing for the establishment of model hotels in Invercargill to be conducted in conformity with the Licensing Act and in the interest of public well-being and of providing for the sale of intoxicating liquor in the district and to provide for the distribution of profits for public purposes."

No-license in Invercargill did not mean that liquor could not be bought by residents. It could be bought in 2 gallon lots or more—but not less—from wholesalers, from the two breweries on the bank of the Waihopai River which for some distance is the boundary between the Awarua and Invercargill electorates, from an hotel only five miles from the Invercargill Post-office although in Awarua, and from another hotel eleven miles away. It was necessary to sign for it and, unless it was collected, to wait a few hours for delivery. Drinks could also be had by

members of various city clubs. To obtain liquor was therefore not at all difficult and involved only slight inconvenience. It was necessary to buy through the wholesalers, have a motor-car or a friend with one, belong to a club, or be able to spare the time and the money to use the frequent taxi service to the nearest hotel, the bus service to the second hotel, or the train to the Port of Bluff, seventeen miles away. On the whole, the system bore hardest on the stranger, who was apt to find himself without a drink when he wanted it, ignorant of the ways in which he could get it—and without that degree of comfort most often found in licensed houses.

In the usual pre-election tussle those who sought restoration argued that no-license created a monopoly of the trade in Invercargill for the nearest hotel. That hotel they said had the largest bar in New Zealand. They prophesied more business for city firms from restoration and even visualized the speedy erection of large and luxurious hotels. There was much talk of a valuable tourist trade. Supporters of no-license spoke of the degradation restoration would bring to "our clean city." The Southland Building and Investment Society and Bank of Deposit, the largest institution of its kind in New Zealand, had, they said, been built on the savings of the people, savings which with restoration would be squandered on liquor. There would be drunkenness, poverty, misery, and crime.

The issue decided, another struggle began. Two petitions were sent to Parliament, one asking for municipal control, the other for the restoration of licensed hotels as in other centres. The Government agreed to neither. It set up the Invercargill Licensing Trust, a body with six members—two nominated by the Invercargill City Council, one by the South Invercargill Borough Council, and three by the Minister of Justice. The Governor-General appoints the Chairman—at present Mr. Hugh Ritchie, the secretary of the Southland Building Society, of which he is also a director.

"The first annual report of the Trust, presented to the Licensing Commission on August 4, showed that the total turnover for the nine months to March 31 was £114,568. The net balance in the account was £23,485. After providing £16,082 for taxation there was a working balance of £6,277. The Chairman of the Trust, in evidence, said "we will have a net profit of from £10,000 to £15,000 a year."

Thus when the Trust began its operations public opinion was divided. One section opposed restoration altogether and was prepared for the worst; another was angered by what was considered interference with private enterprise and the beginnings of State control; the third—and probably the largest—was mildly interested in a social experiment. War conditions also brought problems—short supplies of liquor and restrictions on building. In such circumstances the Trust has "made haste slowly" too slowly for its critics.

The aims of the Trust are—

(1) To build and equip two or three really modern hotels furnished and equipped in the most modern way.

(2) To alter and modernize as far as possible three or four existing hotels that have been taken over—the newest is twenty-eight years old—and to re-equip and refurnish them.

(3) To take over or build one or two hotels which will provide bed only, but will include a cafeteria for cheap but good meals with a bar attached.

(4) To modernize and improve the Brown Owl restaurant and, if necessary, to open one or two more similar restaurants where liquor can be supplied on the "sit down" system.

(5) To establish suburban taverns where there will be no boarding accommodation but where teas and liquor will be provided.

The Trust, in the words of the chairman, is "no more State control than it is private ownership." The Government has made no requests of the Trust and has not directed it in any way. In finance the choice was left open—through the Government or through the bank, and the Trust chose the bank. The first £50,000 was borrowed from the Treasury and the balance financed through the Bank of New Zealand on current account.

It has been suggested that membership of the Trust would be better by election than by appointment. Election, however, would probably bring every three or four years a struggle between the liquor and anti-liquor factions. The existing method ensures a continuous policy—and that policy to-day is the middle course between the desires of the heavy drinker and the ambitions of the prohibitionist, to provide a place where a man may take his wife and family, sit in comfort, and have either drink or food with no jostling and crowding at a bar.

Necessarily, in the average hotel turnover and profit are the main considerations. These have no place in Trust policy. Takings on opening day in Invercargill were £1,262, which, if maintained, would have meant a revenue of £300,000 a year, but the day was a Saturday and they were swollen by the novelty of the occasion. The gross revenue is actually about £150,000 a year, and so far the Trust is not in full operation, having only a few premises open. According to the Chairman, the Trust is not likely for some time to show large profits. It started with no capital and, although profits go back to the community, it is more interested in giving good accommodation than in paying dividends.

The Trust began from scratch. It had no precedent to follow, no premises, no

staff, no capital, no set ideas except a fixed resolution to improve the methods of retailing liquor. Yet it sold liquor over the bar on the first day required by the law. To do this it bought the Brown Owl restaurant in the heart of the city, built two temporary premises, the Kelvin and the Clyde, near the centre of the city, and bought in one of the suburbs the small two-story Appleby Hotel, which had had a licence thirty-eight years before. The Appleby cost £2,636, the Kelvin and the Clyde £6,000 each, and the Brown Owl (including Elmwood, a garden-enclosed dance-hall in one of the suburbs) £20,000.

Later the Trust bought a bulk store in Tyne Street for £6,000, the four-story

The Trust will thus be able ultimately to serve the city and all the suburbs. Although this beginning has been made, little has so far been done with building or alterations. Wartime restrictions have not allowed it. As the Chairman says: "The Trust has so far been able to provide only hotels of which it is not proud." It will be several years before it can provide the facilities at which it aims, particularly since the members consider that housing needs ought to be met first. However, authority has been given to spend £20,000 on alterations to the Grand Hotel.

The first result of restoration has been to make liquor rather easier to obtain. There is now no need to wait for delivery,



building in which the Brown Owl is housed for £43,750, Lind and Twyneham's building next door for £12,000, the Grand Hotel for £43,000, plus another £12,000 for the freehold, Deschler's Hotel for £12,000, the Hotel Cecil for £18,000, and a large private residence adjoining Elmwood, now called Hotel Avenal, for £5,000. Another property in South Invercargill cost £16,000, two sections in North Invercargill have been bought for £1,800, and a section in a close suburb of the city in Gala Street for £2,390 (the price includes two houses), while a section at Rugby Park near the large sports ground is to be taken over at an estimated price of £1,475.

to make a journey by taxi, train, or bus, to buy in 2-gallon lots, or to belong to a club. A few bottles can be bought and taken home should an unexpected visitor arrive. And visitors to the city can get a drink when they want it.

So much can be said for any licensed town. Similarly, the service of drinks in the Kelvin and the Clyde, in the Appleby, and in the lounge of the Grand Hotel is no different. The Grand Hotel lounge is not large enough, nor is it properly adapted for the purpose, but the service is efficient. The Clyde, the Kelvin, and the Appleby are not impressive either inside or out, but they are only temporary premises. In the early months of restora-

tion there was a rush on these places, but, even so, their conduct was at least as orderly as in the bar of any popular hotel at a rush hour, and now that the excitement has died down they are as well conducted as the best privately-owned hotel bars in New Zealand. In the bars of both are a number of tables and chairs at which liquor may be drunk sitting, and they are largely used.

Credit in the bar, shouting by the house, after-hour trading, the supply of liquor to persons under twenty-one years, and the supply of liquor to any one intoxicated are all forbidden in the Trust hotels. There is no incentive to force the sale of liquor. Barmen are paid weekly salaries, and any fines imposed for a breach of the law must be paid by them. The managers and the staff are not allowed to drink during working hours, and shouting is not permitted. All liquor is true to label and full measures are used, while the prices are fixed to return no more than a reasonable profit.

An attempt has been made to induce orderly and moderate drinking. Any one misbehaving is sent a letter of warning by the Trust. Another letter is sent if there is need for it, and a third offence brings a refusal to supply the offender with liquor. This is a method that might be adopted by any club to induce proper behaviour among its members, and it has achieved much the same result.

In the Brown Owl a real experiment has been made. Before it was taken over it was an efficient and popular restaurant supplying meals, morning and afternoon tea, and the usual soft drinks, fruit salads, and ices. It is exactly the same to-day, except that liquor has been added to the menu. Waitresses serve meals and soft drinks, waiters the liquor, which must be bought and drunk at the tables. No one is allowed to approach the bar. Spirits are sold at the hours usual in hotels throughout New Zealand to-day, for about two hours at lunch time and from about 4.30 onwards. The charge for spirits is 10d. a drink—there is no lounge charge—and in size and quality it is noticeably a good drink. The Brown Owl is as largely used as ever, and the patrons include people who are not

drinking and women and children. In the Brown Owl the Trust is reaching towards its objective of providing a place where a man may take his wife and family, sit in comfort, and have drink and food with no jostling and crowding at a bar.

The Brown Owl, like the other Trust premises, keeps strict licensing hours. The supply of liquor is shut off at 6 o'clock. There is one reform that the Trust would like to make that is beyond its power. Recently it sought permission to adjust its hours and remain open for two hours in the evening as an experiment. This was intended to do away, if possible, with the hurried drinking usual between 5.30 and 6 p.m. and to encourage reasonable drinking at table to be given a proper trial. Permission was refused.

After thirty-eight years of prohibition it was expected that with restoration there would be an increase in prosecutions for offences involving liquor. Actually there have been fewer than under prohibition. Sly-grog selling provides an example. Of the sixteen prosecutions for this offence brought in 1944, fifteen were heard before July 1, when the Trust opened its premises. Since then there has been one prosecution for a breach of the Licensing Act by two servants of the Trust. A barman at the Kelvin Hotel was fined £3 for having supplied liquor to a person already intoxicated, and the manager, as licensee, was fined £6. The manager had no knowledge of the offence and the barman was dismissed.

Nor has license affected the revenue of the Southland Building Society in the way suggested. After one year's operation of the Trust there were less arrears owing to the society than under prohibition.

Of the Trust and its work the Chairman in his evidence before the Licensing Commission said: "The objective of any liquor control is temperance and not prohibition. And temperance is a matter of morals and not of laws. We hope in this way to build up a population which, as a matter of good sense and personal taste, will avoid the abuse of liquor and place it in the social life of the community."



SWEET REPOSE

By Sgt. J. A. EVANS.

IT WAS in the first week at Vella that George consolidated his claim to be one of the really sound sleepers. There hadn't been much time to think about a camp, of course, and the fellows were just parked here and there in the bush. Jap planes were over every night at first, and the alarm system came in for a bit of criticism. There was never a morning but George complained that he hadn't heard the whistle, and three blasts on a peep horn didn't seem to penetrate any better. Later, though, when we got the siren out, we thought we were pretty right, and when the chaps about 300 yards away "bludged" a spare one from the Yanks we were well set up. At that stage the phone was switched over to our tent at night, and the others used to pick up the wail from the siren just outside, and repeat it.

We had a few raid-free nights, then when we had been there a fortnight an alarm came through about 0100 hours one morning. I had been well asleep, and was not feeling too happy about the war, or the Japs, as I scrambled out. I clenched my teeth and gave the handle half a dozen venomous winds before I released the shutters. It sounded terrific, and the other one took it up so promptly that they must have been a bit startled. Nothing much happened, and it was not long before I was able to give an equally vigorous "all clear." None of the others used to get up unless ack-ack started, or something like that, and as I got back to bed I envied George merely lying in his net in comfort, listening. Still, I had given the old siren a good burl, and in the morning I was still feeling good about it. As we groped for our boots I

said: "Well, I certainly gave the siren a good send along last night!" George was still a bit fuzzy, and he looked at me for a while before he said: "What siren? We didn't have an alarm, did we?" That's what I mean—when George goes to sleep he doesn't mess about.

When the time came and we had landed at Nissan, we found conditions in the beginning rougher than we'd ever had. When we went to dig in, either we struck coral straight away, or we had good going for a couple of feet and it started to fill with water. Tents and cots were not coming up until later, of course, so we just pigged it under pup tents, though some lucky ones got tarps. There was a Yank radar right along side us, and for the first couple of nights it was giving frequent alarms with a sort of musical honk rather like an expensive car back home. It was a very penetrating sound which could be heard a great distance away, but we'd wait until we heard the Jap coming in a few minutes later before we'd hop down the holes into the slush. Of course, there were always those who cracked hardy, and back at Vella they'd claim after we had spent most of a night down a hole that they'd only got down about 4 o'clock when the ack-ack was heaviest overhead. Still, every one knows that those are the blokes you find cluttering up your fox-hole when you go to get in it.

The Seabees had been lucky, as they had been able to pack everything but the kitchen stove on their vehicles, which all came up in the L.S.T.s on D Day. They were decent, friendly chaps, and when one slipped in to have a cup of tea under the Y.M. lean-to, he offered to

lend George a jungle hammock. He was on night shift, so could sleep undisturbed during the day when there were no raids. "I'll drop one by when I go past to-night", he said. He was as good as his word, and George was then in seventh heaven. Those hammocks are great—you just string them up under a tree, and zip yourself inside the mosquito netting, and there you are, with a waterproof sheet above to keep out rain, and so comfortable you think you're home again. Almost, anyway. George had always been pretty good at driving a point home, and he was insufferable about that hammock. He certainly made it clear that he was one up on us.

We all turned in early, because we were pretty certain the night would be interrupted, and we didn't have lights, anyway. When the first alarm jerked me out of sleep, I saw it was still early—only about 11. I lay there, and soon picked up the noise of the plane. They have a tinny sound different from ours, and always reminded me of the old two-stroke bikes puttering along. None of our guns spoke up, as they didn't want to give away positions unless a big raid made it worth while. You could hear him touring up and down outside, feeling his way.

After a while he started to come in. We said: "Here we go!" and slid out into the muck of the fox-holes. Not George, though. He was one of the crack-hardy school I mentioned, and had said that he wouldn't get up unless it were Tojo himself. From below we could see his hammock slung up there against the sky. We threw some chunks of mud at it, but he stayed put. You can guess, too, that we called out things like: "Don't be a silly fellow!"

We didn't hear much of a swish, but the bomb landed near by in the bush, and sounded like a 90 mm. going off right by us. It jolted the ground like a sudden earthquake shock, and we all found ourselves hugging mud, and liking it. George came out fighting. That was not a time for zips, and I don't suppose a hammock was ever wrecked quicker. He even arrived with a wisp of netting trailing round his throat. He came in as though he had been tackled, and winded both of us. Now we had him! We sorted ourselves out and went him. "Trying to be tough, eh? Who is it up there, anyway—Tojo?" But George was fighting mad. He gritted: "Why don't you rouse a chap when there's an alarm? Fine pals you turned out to be!"

I ask you—what can you do with a fellow who sleeps like that?

