

APRIL 6, 1944

The Rattle, Too

THERE were reminders in some of the discussions in Parliament last week that politics and war observe the same principles. There was another in the House of Commons storm over the equality of the sexes. But the most dramatic reminder was given by Mr. Churchill himself when he pointed out that although a Government "formed in the hour of disaster" had introduced the "most important educational scheme that has ever been attempted," a "very far-reaching policy of national health service," and made both emergency and long-term plans for housing and reconstruction, that although it had done all this without relaxation of the war effort or any party strife, done it while bringing the British Isles and the British Commonwealth "out of the jaws of death" and "back from the mouth of Hell," its reward had been silence or carping criticism. Put in that way, as he was fully entitled to put it, it would seem that ingratitude could hardly go further. It was as if the mother of a child, whom a fireman had brought at mortal risk out of a burning building, had screamed, "But where is his rattle?" Mr. Churchill is the greatest political fireman Britain has seen in centuries—perhaps in all her history. But he is also, and at all times, a man of war, and he knows that war has very little time for gratitude. So he did not complain. He merely drew attention to the facts, which are always and everywhere the same. For every great leader who has ended his life in the sunshine, two have died lonely and cold. Or to put it another way, there is no past in politics and in war; only a future. We are not often big enough, wise enough, or generous enough to say to any leader or to any Government: "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works." Nations have occasionally said that. Far more often they have said, "Get out; we want the rattle as well as the baby—and no scorches on the shawl!"

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

A VISITOR PROTESTS

Sir,—May I, as a British subject, visiting this country for the first time, crave the indulgence of the columns of your publication to protest against the withdrawal of the BBC feature, *Brains Trust*, from your programmes? As the title of this feature suggests, the speakers taking part in the discussions are outstanding persons in Britain well qualified to answer the many questions raised. I consider that the feature programmes on the same lines produced by the NBS are very poor substitutes for the *Brains Trust*, and that the speakers here would do well to study the manner in which they approach their subjects before they are put over the air. I have had the privilege of discussing this matter with many persons in this locality and they, through me, wish also to protest against the withdrawal of this feature.

While writing might I suggest that for the prestige of this country only the proceedings of the House of Representatives which are of interest to the bulk of the people of the country be broadcast. I do not think that the majority of the people wish to hear the "brawlings" which take place and are more concerned with the vital issues under discussion.

BRITISH VISITOR (Havelock North).

(Visitors, whether they are British or foreign, should not rush into print without knowledge. It is folly. Nor should they suppose, however ill-mannered they are, that they are at liberty to insult the legislature of the country in which they are guests. It is impudence.—Ed.)

"THE MAN BORN TO BE KING"

Sir,—I should be glad if you would allow me to emphasise the fact that although "The Man Born to be King" was, as you correctly point out, commissioned and written for the Children's Hour, it is not a play for children. The Children's Hour is a convenient time for the broadcast, because it allows parents to listen and still go to church, but all the plays in the cycle are for grown-ups.

There is also one slight error in your account which it might be well to correct. The passage you quote on page 9 is not from the last play, but from the eleventh, and the last play deals with the Resurrection.

PARSON (Taranaki).

1789 AND ALL THAT

Sir,—The writer of your article on General Tito invokes the spirit of 1789. The French Revolution started a war which lasted for the best part of 26 years (1789-1815), established the absurdity that all men are equal, and caused Macaulay to say: "All down the Loire from Saumur to the sea great flocks of crows and kites feasted on the naked corpses twined together in hideous embraces. No mercy was shown to sex or age. The number of young lads and of girls of 17 who were murdered by that frightful government is to be reckoned by the hundreds. Babies torn from the breasts were tossed from pike to pike along the Jacobin ranks. One champion of liberty had his pockets well stuffed with ears." Going disillusioned to her

death, a victim of the terrible guillotine, Madame Roland said: "Oh Liberty, how many crimes have been committed in thy name."—"FOOD FOR THOUGHT" (Mahina Bay).

PETER RABBIT

Sir,—My little daughter has instructed me to enter a strong protest against the grave injustice done to three of her friends in a recent article on Beatrix Potter. She wishes me to point out that Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-Tail had bread and milk and blackberries for supper, whereas it was Peter (who, as every right-thinking person will agree, had deserved it) who was sent to bed after a dose of camomile tea.

—G. D. JENSEN (Seatoun).

Sir,—I was surprised to find such ignorance shown by the author of the article on Beatrix Potter. Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-Tail did not have camomile tea: it was their brother Peter who did. They were good little rabbits, did as their mother told them, kept right away from McGregor's garden, and had bread and milk and blackberries for tea.—JANET HESSELL, aged 11 (Mangato-whiri).

ARTISTS IN UNIFORM

Sir,—The recent "Artists in Uniform" Exhibition in Wellington caused very considerable interest. The number of people who went rather suggests a wider interest in the arts than New Zealanders are often given credit for. It is however hard to understand why this display was not housed in the National Art Gallery. Four months elapsed between the time of the closing of entries for the exhibition—which was advertised as October 31—and its actual opening. Surely it would have been possible during that time to arrange for the hanging of the pictures in the most fitting setting—the art gallery of the capital city.

ART NOW (Lowry Bay).

(This letter was submitted to the Secretary of the Committee of Management of the National Art Gallery who replied:

"The National Art Gallery has been taken over by the Government for the duration of the war, and is closed to the public. The gallery is housed temporarily in the D.I.C. building, where it has only one exhibition room of comparatively small dimensions. This room it has to share with the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts. When the New Zealand Academy is using the room, the National Gallery has to vacate it, and vice versa. In the National Gallery proper, there are separate rooms which can be lent for special exhibitions, but in the temporary premises there are no such rooms. Consequently, it has not been possible for the committee to lend the gallery to other institutions or departments.")

POINTS FROM LETTERS

Bob (Port Chalmers) sends "appreciation of the entertainment provided by the Chatterboxes from 4YA," and "wonders if they can be persuaded to put over a few more turns."

"Grateful Flora" (Darfield) is troubled about "the insulting letters people send you"—we are not—and begs us to "carry on." We shall.