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Waiting

HOPE deferred makes the heart sick. Expectations that do not mature sooner or later seem unreal. It is impossible to focus attention on a given object and hold it there indefinitely. To repeat the same words, the same thoughts, or even the same movements, over and over again is to go to sleep. Therefore it would be an exaggeration to say that the whole world, or even our small part of it, is getting more and more worked up as the invasion of Europe draws nearer. Those who have been worked up have calmed down again. Those who have been hot have cooled off. Those who have raged at delays rage no longer. Those who have under-estimated the difficulties begin to understand. Those who have been blind begin to see. But nobody doubts any longer. Everybody sees now — no one better than the Nazis — that the circles are narrowing, the bomb explosions taking a pattern, the clouds massing in definite directions. Any day, any hour, this day perhaps as we write these lines, the assault will begin, and waiting will become watching. Then things will happen that the world has never seen before. It has seen comparable artillery barrages. It has seen worse destruction over limited areas. It has seen hills blown away by subterranean mining. But it has not seen, and if it is capable of learning, it will never see again, so much destruction in so many places at the same time, so many of the signs of civilisation being blotted out in a moment or two, such violence above the earth as well as on it, so many earthquakes or so many fires. It is for that we are waiting, and for the speedy end of it, but those people are also right who say that it has already begun. The "softening up" process has certainly begun, and the significance of that phrase will begin to break through if the picture on our cover is multiplied by ten thousand.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

THE MARQUETTE

Sir,—I am writing to you with reference to an item which appears on page 17 of your issue dated May 5. In a news item relating to the Nurses' Memorial Service from 3ZB the following words occur: "who were rescued after the torpedoing of the Hospital Ship Marquette in the Mediterranean in World War I." This is a mistake which is being repeated from time to time, and I am writing to point out that the Marquette was not a hospital ship but an ordinary transport. I happen to know as I was a member of the staff of the New Zealand Stationary Hospital which was on the ship when it was torpedoed.

D. S. WYLIE (Palmerston North).

BREAKFAST SESSIONS

Sir,—For many months the breakfast session from 2YA and other National stations has been a long-drawn out agony to me. What has happened to the good records which we used to have—Gilbert and Sullivan, Peter Dawson and others? As for the almost daily dose of Goldman Band—the limit of endurance was passed long ago.—BREAKFAST WITHOUT TEARS (Woolston).

"THE OX-BOW INCIDENT"

Sir,—I should like to support J.C.R.'s tribute to *The Ox-Bow Incident*, although I don't support his criticism of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

The Ox-Bow Incident was shown in Christchurch on a double-feature programme with a "Burnstead" film. It ran a very short season. If one managed to sit through the Burnstead "tripe," *The Ox-Bow Incident* was a refreshing endorsement of men's power to think and feel and say something, even in Hollywood. It is presumed that the Hays Office departed from their usual negative policy to approve this film because it might DO GOOD. It certainly does good, I think, but not because it has the usual cheap "good-men-win-bad-men-lose" touch, but because it deals with a problem that is always with us, the problem of preserving our sanity and sense of justice, however deeply our feelings may be moved or our anger aroused. It is a pointer as to how films could make a contribution (although like all contributions, it might require a little unselfishness) to rehabilitation and sense in a devalued, bewildered and angry war and post-war world.

When I saw the film, it received the rare tribute of spontaneous applause during its screening, a tribute that few films, however strong their box-office value, are awarded.

M.F. (Christchurch).

JAM AND THE GAS

Sir,—Just before the meat recipe the other morning there was a little reminder asking for economy from users of electricity. Now and then we get the same request about gas, either by radio or through the medium of the daily paper. I found this in a recent number of *The Listener*—Aunt Daisy's page. Quince Conserve—"Allow 1 pint water and ½lb. sugar to each 1lb. fruit. Boil together 2 or 3 hours." Why put in so much water. If you do, you must boil for a lengthy period to evaporate

the excess water. There is not only waste in fuel but vitamins are impaired. I know a capable housewife who has been making jam for over 30 years, and her rule is—1lb. of sugar to 1lb. of fruit, boil for half an hour. She does add a little water to blackcurrants and quinces. Her recipe for Quince Honey gives 1 pint water to 5lb. quinces and 5lb. sugar. Boil for 20 minutes. And her quince honey and jams are par excellence. Aunt Daisy's recipe for Quince Honey says—"Boil for about 2 hours." I have noticed this tendency for lengthy cooking frequently on her page.

FUEL ECONOMY (Hataitai).

WHAT IS ASSONANCE?

Sir,—A review in your issue of March 3 of a book of verse called *Sailing or Drowning*, suggests that the author experiments with assonance. I can find virtually no assonantal rhyme in the book. Assonance is an exact enough term—"the correspondence or rhyming of one word with another in the accented syllable and those which follow it, but not in the consonants." "Famous," "sailor," "neighbour," make assonantal rhyme. A classic in English (the pleasure of quoting which is my chief excuse for writing) contains this:

*Maiden, crowned with glossy blackness,
Lithe as panther forest-roaming,
Long-armed naiad, when she dances,
On a stream of ether floating—
Bright, O Bright Fedalma!*

*From all curves like softness drifted,
Wave-kissed marble roundly dimpling,
Far-off music slowly winged
Gently rising, gently sinking—
Bright, O bright Fedalma!*

A classic of another kind begins:—
*Rock-abye baby, on the tree-TOP
When the wind blows, the cradle will ROCK*

For the kind of correspondence or diaphony that Mr. Curnow employs—"streams," "rains"; "Egyptian," "corruption"; "hatches," "beaches"; "ocean," "collision"—imitated, possibly from an English writer or two who enjoyed a certain vogue a few years ago, there may be a technical term; but it is certainly not assonance. I think I know what Edmund Gosse would have called it, but my concern is not criticism, but the correct use of literary terms.—SUBSCRIBER (Wellington).

Our reviewer says in reply:

(1) I do not much like my own use of the word "assonance," and freely admit that that use is inexact. But I, also, took the precaution of looking up the dictionary, and the *Shorter Oxford* gives the alternative definition "rough correspondence" on which I relied.

(2) I do not know why "Subscriber" should derive such pleasure from quoting the bright Fedalma, unless part of his pleasure is derived from giving pain to others.

(3) The crack about "the English writer or two" seems to me to be irrelevant.

(4) I am really not very much interested in the hypothetical reactions of the late Sir Edmund Gosse to verse experiment in New Zealand in the 1940's.—J. C. BEAGLEHOLE.

A LOVE SONNET

Sir,—I, too, enjoyed reading Ronald Buchanan's skit on modern beauty. I am not a poet and I know it. Is that poetry? I prefer prose of the Churchillian variety. Here is my effort, which, were I a poet, I would entitle "A WOMAN'S FACE."

"Never was there so much time and labour expended upon so small a space at such terrific cost with such poor results!"

THE WAG (Palmerston North).