

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(continued from page 5)

## FILMS AND CHILDREN

Sir,—You report Mr. E. S. Andrews, producer of the Government Film Studios, as saying that the people in the film industry are as intelligent as people in the New Education Fellowship. I am in neither. But I suggest to Mr. Andrews that the people in the armament industry are also intelligent people. Does that fact make their products any less deadly?

No doubt if "a bunch of intelligent people" went to the theatre managers and "guaranteed to provide a good audience" for a children's film, they would put it on. But would that prevent them from putting on films unsuitable for children on most of the other 51 Saturdays?

When Mr. Andrews says that the feelings of the film people are "hurt when they are told that they are monsters who are turning other people's children into delinquents," I feel sad, but I suggest that they would rather have their feelings hurt than their pockets.

"MICKEY MOUSE" (Wellington).

## "PHIZ" AND MR. PICKWICK

Sir,—Even *The Listener* nods. On page 4 of your issue for July 2-8 is shown Mr. Pickwick "as he was originally imagined by Phiz." This is not correct. The first illustrator of Pickwick Papers was Seymour, who drew four illustrations for the first number and



three for the second and drew no more, as he then committed suicide. Phiz came in with the fourth number. The portrait you give is from Seymour's first plate, that of Pickwick addressing twelve assembled members of the club, and of that portrait Dickens said Seymour had "made him a reality." There is thus no doubt that the traditional figure of Pickwick was originally imagined by Seymour and not by Phiz (Halbot K. Browne).—R. L. ANDREW (Kelburn).

[We invite our correspondent to study the signature, which we have enlarged and photographed and here reproduce. If it falls a little short of "Phiz" it hardly suggests "Seymour."—Ed.]

## FARMING IN ITALY

Sir,—Much as I enjoyed the article by Private Edwards on Italian farming, I feel that it might be of even greater value if a couple of points, which appear to have been overlooked, were made clear.

First, Private Edwards' article deals in the main with one particular farm, which would appear, to those who know

the country, to be in the southern part of Italy. It should not, therefore, be assumed by your readers to be a representation of conditions throughout the whole country. For example, near Arezzo and Florence, the majority of the threshing is done by wooden threshing mills similar to, though usually smaller than, those common in Canterbury before the header harvester became popular. I saw some that were made in England. They were driven by oil engine, stationary engine, and in one case by a "traction engine," also of English origin. As far as I could ascertain, the farther north one goes, the more modern the farming methods, though as far as Florence and Rimini, I saw nothing to compare with our extensive mechanisation. In a year around and about the Italian countryside I saw only two tractors. On the Foggia plains I once saw six men, with six horses, and six single furrow ploughs all working in one field!

My other point is this. The Italian word for pound (£) is lira! At par, the exchange rate was 120 lire to the £ sterling. In June, 1940, it was 72.50 to the £ sterling. To-day it is 400 to the £ sterling! This was fixed, I believe, by AMGOT when they took control in Tripolitania. As a result "an ordinary labourer earns 45-50 lire a day," i.e., about 13/- in 1940, and the other price quoted, 14,000-15,000 lire was about £200 in 1940. As the lira, in the country, will still buy nearly as much as it did in 1940, the case is perhaps not quite as it appears in the article. In Veroli, about 60 miles south-east of Rome, we bought radio parts and even complete sets at prices which seemed amazingly low until we realised the facts. Wine, too (vin ordinaire, "purple plonk" or what you will), was about 14 lire a litre, i.e., we paid the Italian 8½d, but he received 4/-! As tradesmen and shopkeepers in Naples, Rome, etc., had adjusted their prices to the 400-to-the-£ level, someone stood a loss somewhere, but it wasn't the wily Kiwi!

R. WOODFIELD (Horrelville).

## A FOOTNOTE

Sir,—Surely your reply to "Audio" (Dunedin) was not up to standard. Your columns are left open for such comments, and "Audio" in all good faith considered he had a sound argument. Whether such argument will bear investigation or not is beside the point, but I feel justified in drawing your attention to the discourteous "brush off" you extended to this old subscriber (as he or she styled himself). I will not task you with such statements as the dairy farmer and his oats nor the mail car and the passengers, but I take exception to the Dunedinite burring his r's, having porridge and going to the Presbyterian Church. There was venom in the latter remark which was not only uncalled for, but unwarranted.

ABOVE BELT (Wellington).

[Our correspondent is taking us far too seriously. "Audio" had every right to make his complaint, which was in no way resented. "Brushing him off" was as far from our mind as ill-will to the Presbyterian Church.—Ed.]

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