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LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(continued from page 5)

ART CRITICS

Sir,—Apropos of nothing in particular, I submit to the judgment of your readers the following, by Alberta Vickridge, in *Poetry and the Play*.

CLYDE CARR (Wellington).

TO A YOUNG ART CRITIC

(who objected to the work of a celebrated painter).

SO he's demodé with his cult of beauty,
And nothing's smart that needs no explanations?
Then let's forget him, and exalt the sooty
Obscurities of new-fledged generations!
Youth is fame's arbiter, and always will be
Youth, the iconoclast, the natural rebel,
And where there's idol-breaking, there shall still be
The most admired who soonest throw the pebble.
Yet, modern critic, you shall taste his sorrow,
For nothing lasts, no cult nor quest nor passion;
The schools who judge to-day are judged to-morrow,
And Youth, not you, shall set to-morrow's fashion;
And you shall see the young men throw the stone,
And smash the cherished gods that were your own.

ART TRAINING IN N.Z.

Sir,—Mr. Fisher's broadcast, on the Art of Painting, was most interesting to me and I find myself in general agreement with his exposition regarding the Painters' and Sculptors' present status in Society, and that the fields of employment are much constricted. His contention that the photographer and the cinema do supply the requirements of the Church and other sections of society, who at one time were the principal patrons of the Arts, is only too well founded; Mr. Fisher thus explains the reason for the present-day artist's outlook and character of his work—but should the artist resign himself to this? To do so seems to be defeatist. I believe that the artist, by reason of his Art and special capacity for emphatic statement, should be able to outbid either the photographer or cinema, and be in fact a better exponent on behalf of his patron than either competitor can be.

Mr. Fisher's outlook is introspective—his closing remarks as to culture are strange hearing; he desires many people to draw and work from the beginning to reach, through labour, the understanding so necessary; yet, he speaks with some disdain of a possible 40 minutes' period to be devoted to such study in the schools, or of lectures which might be given in galleries or elsewhere. He speaks of an élite and a few specially gifted workers separated by a wide gulf from the rest of the community—unless large numbers can be induced to undertake long study.

Does he expect the large numbers of the public then to maintain galleries for the use of a few workers whose products are quite unintelligible to them? Will it not be better for all to do what the writer has advocated for years—to provide some instruction to those interested enough to listen, and opportunities for as many as possible to undertake the labour of beginning the job, at school or later in avocational centres? Not all Mr. Fisher's students will reach the élite stage, but they should all be the

better for having made some acquaintance with the Painter's problem and objective. Why not make available, to as many as possible, opportunities to make a start and leave the élite to a Buddha-like contemplation?

RICHARD O. GROSS (Auckland).

Sir,—I would like to thank *The Listener* for its inclusion of the articles on painting, which have appeared in several numbers. But I beg "Barc" to be more patient and tolerant of the New Zealand malcontents and to look humbly at their work. Hanging committees are not infallible. "Barc" writes, "I think the time approaches when the criterion for the inclusion of a painter's works without much question in a New Zealand Academy Show will be that his work has received hanging space overseas." The effort required to receive hanging space overseas might be used in finding way of showing and having accepted work in New Zealand and in sending overseas exhibitions as well. This is not my idea, but one which might have the goodwill and the support of the public, that the New Zealand Academies, if they must reject, also, hold exhibitions of the rejected paintings. It is for the cultural interest of everyone that the Academies should encourage the natural development of artists, along the many streams which flow from a knowledge of good craftsmanship, and the sheer enjoyment of colour and paint.

I received my training in three art schools in New Zealand, without "the eyes and the lily," and I have sympathised with the hard-working and conscientious models. "Barc's" description of the Julian Ashton School suggests that Australian and New Zealand art schools are similar to-day.

Painting is a universal art, subjected to no boundaries. There is material in this country for overseas artists, new and interesting things for them to see and to learn. The winner of the suggested New Zealand Government Art Students' Travelling Scholarship would train abroad. Could not the United Nations organisation encourage artists whatever their race, who wish to come and live in New Zealand from time to time; thus create a wider vision for the artist and layman alike.

RITA COOK (Christchurch).

DETECTIVE NOVELS

Sir,—I am sure that the article "Who Cares Who Killed Him" attacking detective fiction will be hailed with great joy by many. I consider myself an average New Zealander, who in my youth acquired my literary standards at a New Zealand Secondary School and University and I agree entirely with Edmund Wilson. I have tried to read a Dorothy Sayers' novel, as so many have gushed about her books, but I cannot wade through one, despite the fact that I read all of Tolstoy's "War and Peace" and found it intensely interesting. Lord Peter Wimsey appears to me to be just fatuous.

I have read works of Ngaio Marsh, Leslie Ford, Mignon Eberhart, and confess that after reading one, and working out, or trying to work out, the identity of the murderer, to read several