

NOVEMBER 2, 1945

**Two Voices**

**A** CORRESPONDENT asks if we were asleep when we allowed one contributor last week to praise the Salzman concert and another to condemn it. We were wide awake. We saw no reason then, and we see none yet, why we should refuse the use of our columns to a contributor who had enjoyed the concert because we had already opened them to a contributor who had not. Both opinions seemed to us honest; both were expressed intelligently; and each was presented as the reaction of one individual. They could both have been right, and with those qualifications no doubt were. A concert arranged for 2,000 people has almost as many purposes. It aims to please some of those people all the time but it never tries to satisfy all of them any of the time. Even if we simplify the matter beyond the limits of truth and reasonableness, we have two or three broad aims which can't be coalesced further. We have an appeal to those whose taste is fine and exclusive, who take no pleasure in anything but the best, and who, if the concert were for them only, would get up and go at the first descent into the popular. No one knows what proportion they are of any audience but everybody knows that they are not a big proportion. They are however entitled to say what they think and feel about the performers, and especially about the items, and the more often they say it, if they are respectful and courteous, the better it is for the whole audience. For the other large group, those who have no difficulty in listening to second- and even third-rate stuff, who are not sensitive but completely sincere, enjoy nearly everything that is offered to them, and the better that is the richer and more fruitful their enjoyment becomes. They too are entitled to express their opinions, without apology and without superior checks on their enthusiasm, and *The Listener* has as strong an obligation to one group as to the other. It has not the same kind of obligation to both, but an obligation of some kind to both as often as it takes notice of music or plays or painting or books.

**LETTERS FROM LISTENERS****THANKSGIVING FOR VICTORY**

Sir,—I listened with great pleasure to the interesting presentation of Vaughan Williams' "Thanksgiving for Victory." I may be wrong, but here are some criticisms:

1. The version of the Old Testament from which the passages are taken is poorer, less majestic and less clear in this instance than a readily available older translation. I speak solely from the aesthetic point of view.

For instance:—

"And they shall build the places that have been waste from of old, and shall raise up ancient ruins, and shall repair the desolate cities, that were destroyed for generation and generation," is to be preferred to

"And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations. And they shall repair the waste cities, the desolation of many generations."

It may be merely a matter of taste, but among other things it seems to me that the repetition in the latter of "waste" and "desolation" lacks both majesty and artistry and implies considerable poverty of synonyms on the part of the translator.

Yet repetition may add enormously to the majesty of a line as in

"Go through, go through the gates, prepare ye the way of the people."

2. But I am also captious enough to object to the remainder of this verse also.

"Cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones," is I suggest obscure, and the second repetition is too much of a good thing. I prefer

"Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way for the people, make the road plain, pick out the stones, and lift up the standard to the people."

3. The inclusion in the work of Kipling's

*"Teach us delight in simple things,  
The mirth that has no bitter strings;  
Forgiveness free of evil done,  
And love to all men 'neath the sun."*

is a pity, for it's doggerel. The sentiments are worthy of course.

Now as to the execution.

1. It was just beyond the soprano.

2. "Heritage" has no long "a" and is accented on the first not the last syllable.

The music I leave to others; for all I know it is very good.

VINCENT COUNTY (Wellington).

**WERE YOU ASLEEP?**

Sir,—Who was right, the contributor who said on page 8 of your latest issue (October 26) that the Salzman concert was a frost or the one who assured us on page 25 that he was moved almost to tears? I am with Arthur Gill. But the question is, were you asleep when you gave those two contributors their liberty in the same issue?

"CHESHIRE CAT" (Wellington).

(We refer to this letter in our leading article.—Ed.)

**FORGIVING AND FORGETTING**

Sir,—Your article should touch the hearts and consciences of all merciful men and women. Cannot we do something practical about it? These men deserve the best we can give them, and I suggest that a really worthwhile hospital be built as a war memorial and that it specialise in plastic work, nervous

and mental cases, and be for those who have suffered at the hands of our enemies.

It would be so much better to build it from public donations from a truly sympathetic people than have it run by the State. Efficient perhaps, but without the personal, loving touch that seems to pervade the London hospitals which are mainly supported by those who have pity for the sick and needy. If one atomic bomb costs millions surely we can "afford" to pay for a service of love which would bring in a far more satisfactory return. "Blessed be the man that provideth for the sick and needy; the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble." — ANNABEL C. BESANT (Devonport).

**SEX KNOWLEDGE**

Sir,—As a woman of nearly 60 with 32 years of married happiness behind me, I feel I cannot allow J. Durning's prudery to pass unchallenged. I have been greatly disturbed to find among our young people a high percentage of couples, admirably suited in temperament, either seeking divorce after three

*More letters from listeners will be found on page 24.*

or four years of married life, or living together completely at variance with each other. This state of affairs creates a home environment guaranteed to have a tragic effect on the characters of their children. Since no child can grow up a normal human being in an unhappy home, it is the children who are the greatest sufferers. Since I know that my own happiness was built on the sure foundation of a sensible knowledge of the functions of sex, I feel it my duty to applaud G. W. Parkyn's approval of Margaret Mead's book. How much better than the hush-hush attitude of so-called civilised people, who leave the most sacred and beautiful experience in life to chance—simply because "it is the custom." Or do they merely lack the moral courage to even try to enlighten their children?—"AN ENLIGHTENED WIFE" (Wellington).

**FREEDOM OF THE AIR**

Sir,—In reply to C.J.C. may I state that I quoted the term "Atheistic Theory of Evolution" exactly as I heard it; also that the preacher concerned said that the divinely inspired story of the creation was the only one that should be acceptable to his hearers and that any atheistic theory was an invention of the devil, etc., etc. If C.J.C. says otherwise, then it was not he I listened to. However, it makes little difference after all, since science deals only with facts, and biology, geology, and zoology being factual sciences are inherently atheistic. (The term "atheistic evolution" could mean the evolution of atheism).

Biology has no bias other than toward the truth and certainly cannot be mixed with Biblical creed or dogma, no matter what C.J.C. believes or preaches. His letter shows a definite bias by his admission of traditional acceptance of his faith. He also claims that "reason pre-cedes, accompanies, and follows the act of faith." How can this possibly be true

when little children are taught parrot-fashion religious exercises and catechism long before they are capable of reasoning, and at an age when doubt is crushed by fear of divine wrath and when no antidote is administered?

I claimed no monopoly of the name of Rationalist, but merely asked that religious broadcasts be open to reply and discussion over the air.

This, to me, is only common justice.

R. HULBERT (Waipukurau).

Sir,—Mr. Williams will, I trust, pardon me if I modify his somewhat extravagant and misleading statement that "no one . . . has ever developed a new form . . . of animal by any other means than by breeding it from previously existing ancestors." My suggestion is that "no one has ever developed a new form of animal." The breeding experiments with the *Drosophila Melanogaster* begun in 1910 have produced over 400 varieties of this fly. All of these varieties except those too imperfect to breed at all, have been able to breed freely with the parent stock. When wild species of the fly can be induced to cross, they either yield no offspring at all, or produce sterile hybrids. Immutability of species seems to be the rock on which most evolutionary theorists founder, in fact belief in evolution to-day must rest on vague generalities just as Darwin privately confessed in 1863.

May I also point out to "Quote Fair" that fossils of men of modern type have been discovered in deposits certainly at least as old as, probably older than, those containing Java man, Peking man and their dubious confreres, so that no fossil has yet been proved ancestral to modern man. I find it a less severe tax on my imagination to believe that "man suddenly appeared in his full glory" than to accept the fantastic implications of atheistic evolution.

M. FINLAY (Wellington).

**CONCERT MANNERS**

Sir,—While listening to 2YA's broadcast of the Pina Salzman concert I could not help wondering if our New Zealand audiences will ever be educated up to the point of not applauding between the movements of symphonies or concertos. It seems to break the continuity and quite spoil the atmosphere. I could not help noticing the difference when I heard, the next night, from the BBC a recording of Myra Hess playing a Mozart Concerto at one of the Prom Concerts. There was absolute silence in between "movements" and then the burst of rapturous applause at the finish.

The applause between movements must be very disconcerting to both soloists and conductor, and I am sure a big percentage of the audience would be more than pleased if it could be stopped.

LISTENER (Christchurch).

**BATTLE OF JUTLAND**

Sir,—I was very surprised to hear the announcer in a recent 2ZB quiz competition inform the world that the flagship in the Battle of Jutland was H.M.S. Lion. Each battle squadron, battle cruiser squadron, cruiser squadron, etc., had its own flagship. H.M.S. Lion was the flagship of the battle cruiser squadron with Sir David Beatty in command. The flagship of the whole operation was H.M.S. Iron Duke, with Sir John Jellicoe as commander-in-chief.—"ONE WHO WAS PRESENT" (Wanganui).