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Lord Louis Mountbatten

LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN, who has a sense of humour, must get a good deal of secret amusement out of the strange things destiny has done to him. First it brought him into the world a prince's son and the play-fellow of a whole school of princes; and that made him to begin with the subject of adulation on the one hand and of suspicion on the other. If princes are competent the flatterers call them men of genius and the jealous belittle them; if their talent can't be hidden it is dangerous; if it can be questioned it is family luck or a build-up. All these things and a great many more have been said about Lord Louis and would have been said whatever career he had followed. But he has played with almost diabolic deliberation into the hands both of the adulators and the denigrators, and tied them all up in knots of confusion. To bewilder the adulators he became an engineer, an admiral, an air-marshal, and an over-all commander of combined operations (land, sea, and air). To make the denigrators wonder he became both successful and popular—not merely a machine operator or a mathematical organiser but a commander whose men knew him and trusted him and exalted him into the world's lime-light. We remember too in a broadcasting journal that he was one of the earliest students in the Navy of radio developments and made enough progress to be trusted with the preparation of a training manual. He even grew to be about six inches taller than other men. So if he is not a practical joker he sounds like one. If he had to be the son of a prince and the cousin of a king, he would be three or four other things too that most people can never be, and then they would never know where to begin measuring him and would leave him alone. Now the joke is against the world whether it accepts or rejects him, or, like New Zealand, just looks at him with wide-eyed admiration.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

O, TO BE IN ENGLAND

Sir,—May I suggest to Ronald Meek that it is the lop-sidedness of his values that is driving him from New Zealand? If he enjoyed a belly to laugh with as much as brains to think with he'd find plenty of scope—if restricted company—in New Zealand.

Speaking for myself, after 20 years here, it isn't English brains nor English culture that I miss, but English laughter. And this only of late years. Because fortunately for me my early days in this country were spent in Public Hospitals, where the English tradition of laughter has taken root and produced its own hilarious variety. And it isn't likely to wilt—as I know to my cost—so long as English people with their queer English ways emigrate to take up posts in these hospitals.

But now, to have a real good belly-shaker, I have mostly to wait till I meet some old hospital friend.

In my opinion what's wrong with us here is that we have so many brains to reform us and so little laughter to transform us. The more brains that export themselves the better. But if the owners of them can come back in due course with their belly muscles toned up, I for one will welcome them as just the people we want.

E. P. DAWSON (Tauranga).

WHEN THE WIND BLOWS

Sir,—The molten iron of impulse may contain within its heat the essence of much good, but the writer of judgment does not accept as finished work the rough casting of his thought. He returns when the mould has cooled, brushes off the sand, grinds down the burrs, and machines his job with the knives of reason. I am sure that if Mr. Hamilton had revised his letter in this manner we should have received from him a more rational judgment. *The Listener* review of *When the Wind Blows* was remarkable for this, if for nothing else, that it was a novel by our leading short story writer seen through the eyes of our leading essayist. In my opinion both author and reviewer showed to advantage, and *The Listener* treated us to striking examples of differing prose, each of them excellent. So far as Mr. Holcroft's judgment is concerned, it was obviously not given on impulse, but was arrived at after long and serious consideration. Obviously again, even if not wholly sound, it was a judgment of merit and was patently sincere. A point for Mr. Sargeson, however, is that he has nourished himself on modern American authors, whereas Mr. Holcroft has derived from traditional English literature; and it may be that Mr. Holcroft is a little out of sympathy with Mr. Sargeson. I do not say that he is; I say it is possible. From my reading of the review it appeared that he judged the book for its development of character, for its study of the growth of a boy against the setting of a certain environment, rather than the growth of character; and with such a method the characters are ancillary, or like segments of an environmental whole. Whether such a novel is to be considered complete and altogether satisfying, I leave for abler critics, although I hold for freedom in art.

My chief quarrel with Mr. Hamilton, however, is with his remarks concern-

ing "the small esoteric group . . . slightly neurotic, slightly risky," etc., and his insinuation that Mr. Holcroft is a member of such. A statement of this kind leaves an erroneous impression, for Mr. Holcroft, although his work is based on tradition, has flowered into a strong individuality: one that is neither esoteric nor neurotic, nor an offshoot of a circle, nor shared by a clique. Mr. Holcroft is always himself, and above all, he is remarkably sane and balanced, a little too sane, perhaps, for certain literary growths, growths that, in my opinion, may have none the less merit because, forged in neurosis, they bear a mark of strange fire.—WALLACE GAITLAND (Invercargill).

THE UNIVERSITY

Sir,—In your issue of March 15 you published a letter from Bertha Bogle advocating a super-University for selected graduates "who desire to find truth not only for its own sake, but for the sake of humanity." This is a worthy cultural

More letters from listeners will be found on pages 18 and 19

ideal and I have no intention of condemning it, but I doubt whether this truth can be discovered within the cloistered walls of a University by those qualified simply in academic philosophy.

I am myself a graduate of the University of New Zealand, but have had my education extended by four years of the more down-to-earth philosophy of the Services. I say I have had my education extended advisedly, for, of necessity, I have gained a broader knowledge of my fellow men—a crude method of learning psychology perhaps, but an effective one.

Your correspondent's proposals would seem a little less Utopian to me if she had made some effort to ensure that those graduates picked to set us on the path of progress had a little more knowledge than that culled simply from books. A philosophy that takes little account of people is largely pedantry. However, in the final analysis I do not think there is any magic panacea for the world's ills to be discovered by a select band of experts. The remedy (for both the individual and the world) is that advocated by most psychologists from Christ downwards—think less of the Self and become big enough to see beyond your own narrow circle. The problem is one of application, not discovery.

As a result, our greatest modern problem is to decide how to effect this change in people—if it is possible at all. I do not intend to argue the pros and cons of this fundamental problem, but all the intellectual wrangling in the world, and all the "true universities of libraries of books" will not solve it. In other words, our best brains must not cloister themselves with others of their own kind—they must find out about people for themselves. In the past they have talked too facetiously about philosophies and "isms" and too little about people. We label people as Americans, Englishmen, Russians, Communists, Reactionaries. The group has taken the place of the individual. It has been sometimes charged that the community takes too

LONDON NEWS

After consideration of the operation of the revised schedule of news broadcasts it has been decided to resume the 7.0 a.m. London News on Monday, April 8. The morning broadcasts thereafter will be as follows:—

1YA, 2YA, 3YA, 4YA:
6.0, 7.0, 8.0 a.m. daily.
2YH, 3ZR, 4YZ:
7.0, 8.0 a.m.

(Sundays excepted).

The 7.0 a.m. news will be a recording of the news received at 6.0 a.m.

little notice of its intellectuals (i.e., the University). True. But at the same time the intellectuals have taken too little notice of the community.

F.A.P. (Wellington).

FORWARD?

Sir,—I see no reason why people should not enjoy popular music, but the fallacy expressed by "Present and Future" requires correction. Classical music is not out of date. Apart from some of Handel's sacred songs and a few odds and ends, the great classical works were not even names to the majority of last generation in New Zealand. The knowledge and popularity of classical music has not only increased, but appears to find to-day its greatest following among young people. There is much to suggest, for example, that the personnel of the Summer School of Music at Cambridge was far from being antediluvian (*Listener*, February 15). This does not mean, of course, that all or even most listeners under 35 have discovered classical music—which is undoubtedly their loss—but that a large proportion of these than ever before are discovering how to listen and what to listen for in classical music. If "Present and Future" and some others were in this happy position they would soon discover that "dirges" is hardly the word to describe the type of music in which some of the brightest and most care-free moods of all are frequently to be found. Because it is easier for the relatively young to overcome prejudice, which was probably stronger a generation ago than to-day, a very high percentage of listeners to classical music are found among young listeners. In comparing old with new, I suggest a truer counterpart of Bing and Vera Lynn could be found among the music-hall singers of pre-1914 and the soapy ballads of the drawing-room tenors. Every generation, in other words, has its "popular" music. That of to-day will become old-fashioned, as the popular tunes of yesterday have already; I doubt if classical music will ever share its fate.

ALL TIME (Pukekohe).

JOAN HAMMOND

Sir,—Is it permissible for an elderly and infatuated admirer of Miss Joan Hammond to request that the programme featured in Famous Artists series at 4YZ on Sunday afternoon, March 31, be repeated from some station which can be heard by northern listeners? She was recently claimed as an Australian—another Phar Lap case. Whatever her birthplace she is in my opinion unique as an operatic soprano.

TE. KUITI