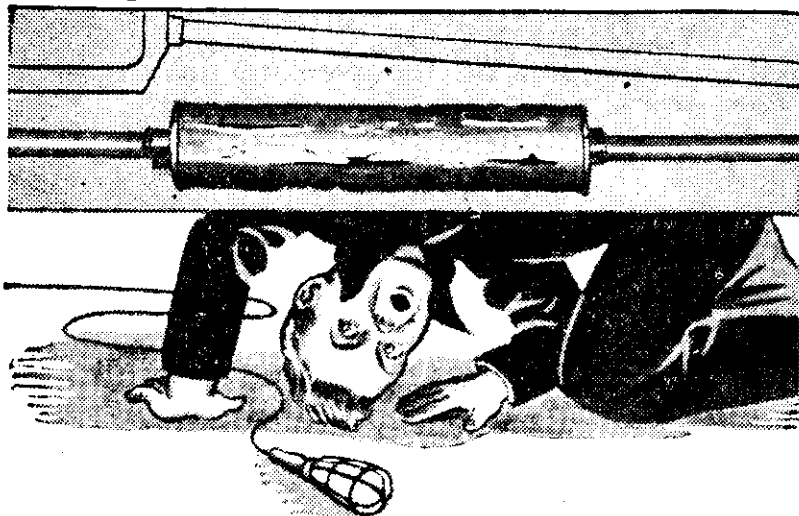


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LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(continued from page 5)

"WHEN THE WIND BLOWS"

Sir,—I read Frank Sargeson's *When the Wind Blows* when it first came out and I've read it more than once since. I read Mr. Holcroft's review of it in a subsequent *Listener*. I've read Ian Hamilton's answering letter in *The Listener* and, by chance on the same day, I read Shakespeare's 146th Sonnet:

"Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Fooled by these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer
death,

Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds
on men
And Death once dead, there's no more
dying then."

These lines are the only ones of Shakespeare given us in the *Oxford Book of Christian Verse*. They present the problem of the Christian soul in its mortal body. I think with a legitimate transposition they also present the problem of the artist in any and every society, and also give a picture of Mr. Hamilton's compost heap, by which metaphor he suggests that in his latest novel Frank Sargeson exemplifies this power to feed on death.

Mr. Holcroft, in his admittedly tentative review, misses this sustained theme of a soul, in its inevitable isolation, using repeated deaths in this way. But I think Mr. Hamilton sounds a note of commiseration with "Henry" that is unjust to the author's successful composting—to continue the metaphor—of self-pity in the interest of rebirth. *When the Wind Blows* ends on the same note of resurrection as is found in Shakespeare's sonnet. It is only stillbirth that knows the pangs of creation and misses the joys.

There is little doubt that this power of rebirth through death is the keynote of Mr. Sargeson's achievement as an artist, and is surely the source of all truly creative art. That it is also the basis of the Christian philosophy perhaps gives an indication of where salvation is to come from if it's coming at all to modern society.

E. P. DAWSON (Tauranga).

O, TO BE IN ENGLAND

Sir,—Having read the article by Mr. Meek and the leader in *The Listener* I readily agree that there is a challenge to us in the implication that New Zealand sadly lacks encouragement for her young and thinking people. Why else do so many wish to leave the country at that period of their lives when they can give their best?

Mr. Meek told us in an honest, well-balanced way that he wants to leave because of this lack of encouragement. I don't think Mr. Meek can be dismissed as a discontented young radical; that is too easy a way out. Who but a real ostrich could be contented just now? To me, he is symbolic; there are many of us in the same generation and what we feel is not just a symptom of war unrest.

I love this country, but so many of its inhabitants seem to be immersed

in a stupor-like sleep, lying on the comfortable mattress of religious dogma, with any waking movement quickly put to sleep again by their numerical superiors—the aged with their cautious, fearful lullabies.

I cannot but think that my generation and its successors would flourish more hopefully in a community less crammed with church spires, less overwhelmed by a hoary, trained intolerance. Instead let us have a more inspirational religion, and let the older generation be prepared to surrender the reins and encourage, instead of quelling, that imagination which, plus the energy of youth, should be the driving force of a country, a nation, or a world.

JEAN ROBERTSON (Wellington).

THE "DARK" AGES?

Sir,—In the *Education Gazette* for the First of March there is a full account of the broadcast which so astounded Mr. Miller. I must say I felt equally astounded. Possibly the compiler has mistaken the middle ages for the dark ages (so called). But to say outright that the middle ages saw a "black out on art education, science—even thought, and everything making for progress," is unmitigated balderdash. As a sample of the new history, this is certainly bad news. I suggest to the compiler another angle on the middle ages, Chesterton's "The Mediaeval world was far ahead of the modern world in its sense of the things in which all men are at one, death and the daylight of reason, and the common conscience that holds communities together. Its generalisations were saner and sounder than the mad materialistic theories of to-day."

JUST JUDGMENT (Okato).

Sir,—I was right glad to see Mr. Harold Miller's letter of March 25. I should like to be assured that broadcasts to our school children are supervised. It is outrageous that such fabulous stuff in the guise of history as Mr. Miller draws attention to should be broadcast to our children, or in fact, to any uneducated or partly-educated adult, who might think it true.

P. R. MILLS (Marlborough).

CRICKET PHOTOGRAPH

Sir,—Wouldn't it have been better to have said "some have shadows and some have not" in the caption to your photograph of the Basin Reserve (March 22 issue)?

Lancaster Park has a gasometer near by, but it doesn't cast a shadow over the wicket (in the Wellington-Australia match the batsmen complained because of a shadow), so there is no need to remove it.

However, I thoroughly enjoyed the use of the picture, but I wish our chaps better luck next time. Thanks very much.

EDGAR J. STEEDS

(New Brighton).

J. ARTHUR RANK

Sir,—The following extract concerning J. Arthur Rank is from *Film Preview* (January issue) and may be of interest to G.M.:

"He first purchased control of the largest theatre chains in Great Britain—the Gaumont British and Odeon cir-