

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(continued from page 5)

O, TO BE IN ENGLAND!

Sir,—Those two good New Zealanders, Julia Bradley and Elsie Locke, are to be congratulated on their effective answer to the defeatist attitude of R. L. Meek and the other poor frustrated souls who fail to realise the glorious opportunity for our best brains to express themselves right here at home. In a new country the opportunities obviously must be better for worthwhile creative work than in the tradition-bound old world. A few people may earn more money there, but our standard of living is the highest. The majority of our scientists and artists are as good as the majority of those overseas.

I wonder how much the idea that good artists (and by the term I mean followers of all the arts) must go to England is based on snobbery? What matters is not the cultural level of the few who cultivate, create, and understand the arts in their higher form, but the cultural level of the masses. There is more true culture in the work of the Plunket Society than in that of the Art Galleries of Europe. Hide-bound tradition has been a curse in the Old World for

two centuries, driving many of their finest brains to find expression in new lands. Yet we find people here at home trying to model our literature, music, painting, the theatre, and even our language, on the old forms instead of on the freer cultural background of our limitless opportunities.

It is necessary for us to send people abroad for experience, of course, but it must not be forgotten that many people come here to see how we do things, and so if those who leave our shores will return after completing their studies and lend a hand in the development of our country, the cry that talented young people must go abroad to make their way would shortly be heard no more. In the meantime why is it that literally thousands of Englishmen and women are trying to secure passages to New Zealand? **ENZEDDER** (Upper Hutt).

Sir,—It would be safe to assert that for one New Zealander who would elect to go to Britain except as a visitor, a thousand in Britain would elect to reside permanently in New Zealand. This is, of course, mainly due to the happier

economic conditions prevailing here. Perhaps in the years that lie immediately ahead such an improvement in economic conditions in Britain may be effected that the number of people who would elect to sail away from its shores will be reduced. So far as those who seek cultural enjoyment are concerned there is no law to prevent them forming centres of their own on the same lines as others have done in older hands. Surely it is up to those who feel that there is some need for such centres to set to work in the matter and not leave the job to others. **R. S. MACKAY** (Auckland).

Sir,—It would be most interesting if someone would provide and your journal publish particulars as to the proportionate time allotted to art, music, and literature (not including languages) in Government schools of various countries. Such figures would prove nothing, but should give some indication of interest taken in these subjects by parents.

As to enjoying music while "millions of Chinese living on and below the bread line" had none, the pennies I gave in payment would not have gone a long way in providing entertainment for them, and the Chinese themselves would understand. "Let ceremonies and music have their course until the earth is filled with

them!" Out of their microscopic wages the Chinese poor pay for the bare necessities of life and with what is left they buy: a fiddle; a canary; books; gaudy headgear for their children; gorgeous silk to embroider a pair of slippers (to wear, not to sell); a flower for their hair; kites; toys. Love of art in its various forms permeates Chinese life and the belief that artistic appreciation is secondary to and follows upon social reform is not part of their philosophy.

In concluding, I must confess to being, as a type, even worse than the lady who discussed T. S. Eliot so inopportunistically, as I am quite capable of reciting Macneice over an early morning cup of tea, though I am not just one "accustomed to moving in restricted circles," but one who has had to adapt herself to widely diverse ways of life in three different countries, with blood and mind originating from yet another, and heart a slave to a fifth—England. — **ONE WHO WANTS TO RUN AWAY** (Mount Albert).

Sir,—The more one thinks about the subject, the more melancholy the whole thing appears. Mr. Meek's chief reasons seem to be that the country is small, and that rebels are not honoured here.

May I remind Mr. Meek that some of the greatest minds of all time found

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I don't know if all brides are alike, but ironing a man's shirt used to get me down. To make matters worse, I was always burning my hand on the iron.

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