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LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(continued from page 5)

"SUNDOWNER'S" ARTICLES

Sir,—May I congratulate you on the articles by "Sundowner" in recent issues. The writer will have performed a valuable service if he can convey to townspeople that farming is not only a commercial business but also a way of life, and the only one known to thousands of men and women and their children who wage a never ceasing war with the forces of nature in their efforts to gain a living from the soil. Curiously enough, the harsher the struggle with poor soil and bitter climate the more deeply the hearts of the people become rooted, as witness the exceeding sorrow and bitterness of heart of the people of the western Highlands of Scotland when evicted from their poor cottages and poverty-stricken soil to make room for so-called deer forests—where trees were as scarce as feathers on a frog. I would remind "Sundowner" that bad fences do not necessarily indicate a poor owner nor even a poor farmer. Fences are a matter of psychology—some farmers have a mania for good fences and impoverish themselves on first taking up land by spending too much on fences; others concentrate on quick returns while their fences gradually fall into disrepair, becoming a source of vexation to their neighbours and an eyesore to travellers. Please send a heavily-marked copy of "Sundowner's" remarks on trees to the Commissioner of Death Duties who has been known to tax the trees on a deceased farmer's estate. We are continually advised to plant trees to beautify the home surroundings, for shade and shelter and future timber and the advice is good. I have yet to meet the man who was pleased with the returns of the sale of his pine trees. A neighbour has just sold a plantation of seventy 40-year-old trees for £80, approximately 23/- each. The price will not recompense him for the replanting and the loss of their shelter.—"A FARMER WHO LOVES TREES" (Waipukurau).

APPRECIATION

Sir,—May I express my appreciation of two recent programmes from 1YA—the Rev. G. A. Naylor's "Lands of Fantasy" and John Reed's "Bypaths of Literature." Let us have more programmes like these from these men, whose voices, so admirably suited to radio broadcasting, are a pleasure to the listener's ear, and who no doubt have a fund of interesting and valuable material at their fingertips.

L.C. (Milford.)

H. G. WELLS

Sir,—If Mr. Bell will take another look at his book on logic, he will discover that "best," as I used it, was not a "coloured" term, but simply the literal expression of an objective fact; for it is an objective fact, admitted by all historians, that such men as St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Shakespeare, Descartes, Leibniz, Newton, were among the best minds of their age, and it is generally agreed that Maritain is the equal of any thinker now alive. It is likewise an objective historical fact that Christianity is the source of all that is best in our western civilisation, such as our conviction of the supreme worth of the individual man as an individual. I suppose, of course, that one has a scale of values, in which moral convictions rank higher than mechanical invention,

economic processes, or political organisation. The history of recent years would seem to have provided an empirical proof of the validity of that scale of values.

If Mr. Wells's mission was, as Mr. McCracken has declared, "to produce equality and plenty from the horrors of class and monetary distinction" and "to do this without authoritarianism," it is small wonder that he died a disappointed man. Squaring the circle would have been much easier. However, as Mr. Wells died almost a millionaire, I doubt whether the abolition of monetary values was part of his programme. Mr. McCracken's reference to religion as "humbug" is amusing; he seems unaware of the fact that the biological term for man is "homo sapiens"; and he has taken literally the phrase "a battering down of open doors," whose metaphorical significance I should have thought was obvious. As for the vigorous language used by Christ, e.g., in St. Matthew XXIII, the tone is quite different from that of Mr. Wells's utterances; besides it is by no means certain that the persons attacked by Mr. Wells were comparable to the Pharisees.

Surely Mr. Wasmuth's canons of good taste are excessively refined if they condemn a criticism of the ideas and work of Mr. Wells, simply because that criticism is occasioned by a laudatory obituary. And what harm is there in "parading values" or "advancing a spiritual diet," when those values are accepted by about a third of the human race, some of them even by the vast majority of mankind? Christianity, despite the pressing invitation of secularists, will not "forsake its mysteries," and their threat of "leaving it in the discard" it treats with a tolerant smile.

G.H.D. (Greenmeadows).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

STUDIO RECITALS

Sir,—How long are listeners to put up with studio recitals? "Encourage local talent" has been a popular slogan for the last 50 years, but who ever heard of any good accruing from such encouragement? The great faults to be found in these studio vocal performances are:

- (1) Poor voices.
- (2) Entire lack of art sense and the consequent murdering of good music.
- (3) The inordinate length of torture suffered by listeners—often a full half-hour at a time.
- (4) Choice of music unperformable by the aspirants to fame, and
- (5) Victimisation of talented and excellent accompanists, for whom it must often be the last refinement of torture to have to assist at these amateur performances.

Genuine lovers of music, hungry to hear celebrated songs by Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt, Schubert, Schumann, Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Mallinson, Vaughan Williams, etc., etc., surely must hasten to escape the miseries of a studio recital by switching to another station, only to find another recital going on there. Escape! But where to? To the commercial stations? To the stations where "fading" is so prevalent that it becomes a nuisance?

I would suggest a more careful examination of these amateur "aspirants to fame" before they are allowed to bore the public to madness.

H. E. GUNTER

(Palmerston North).

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