

AUGUST 20, 1948

Family Casualties

THE fact that we print the article on orphanages which appears on Page 10 of this issue does not mean that we agree with everything in it. It means that we accept the duty of opening up the subject for public discussion. Our knowledge of such places is not wide enough or intimate enough to permit us to be dogmatic on any issue but one, namely, that the best institution is a poor substitute for a good home. Our contributor of course agrees with this and emphasises it; but she believes that the gulf between home and institution can be narrowed, and that it should never have been so wide and bleak. One of the obstacles to reform is the fact that all orphanages begin in pity: because the worst of them was an expression of Christian charity in the first place, it is difficult to criticise any of them without hurting the unselfish men and women who subsequently carry them on. But every reform hurts somebody. Every complaint is a complaint against somebody, and if we are doing less than the best we should be doing for the children themselves we must all share the responsibility and not use the feelings of a few good people as an excuse for shirking our duty. It will surprise many of us, to begin with, to discover that so large a proportion of the inmates of orphanages are not orphans at all. It should disturb us, if it is true, that brothers and sisters are not normally reared as brothers and sisters, but separated through "fear of sex complications" and brought up as strangers. The fact that there are here and there institutions which almost are homes in the best sense emphasises the bleakness of the others, and our contributor suggests that size alone is one of the obstacles to happier conditions in the larger places. Whether she is right or wrong in this matter, or practical or impractical in her approach to the problem as a whole, it is a public service to provoke us all into thinking about it from a new angle.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS**MAORIS AND MOAS.**

Sir,—In the article "How Man Came To New Zealand" (*Listener*, June 25) there is a reference to the Moa-hunters. It says "They killed off the moa and other birds." That was apparently some considerable time before A.D. 1350. I have a book written by an Army doctor stationed for eleven years in New Zealand prior to 1859. This author, speaking of moas and referring to the species *Notornis* in particular, says: "One living specimen of this last species of moa, the link between a living and a dead race was caught alive by sealers in the year 1850; and several others have been seen since then in unfrequented parts of the Middle Island near Dusky Bay."

Do you think that might be true? (I quote from *The Story of New Zealand* Vol. 1., by Thompson).

L. FULLERTON JOHNSON
(Cambridge).

(It is, we understand, the opinion of the authorities that Thompson's report was probably true. Dr. R. A. Falla, Director of the Dominion Museum, told us, when we read this letter to him, that he knew of no reason for doubting Thompson; he added that his predecessor, Dr. W. R. B. Oliver, also took him seriously.—Ed.)

COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Sir,—When your correspondent G. F. Holibar talks about the Russian way of life, he is talking rubbish. There is—in the abstract—no Russian, English, or American way of living. You either live vitally and purposefully or you don't really live at all, and this can be done in any country. Russia, like all capitalistic countries, has its classes, the well-to-do and the poor. The Dean of Canterbury's book is comparatively worthless in appraising conditions in Russia. Much of the progress that has been made in Russia is mainly due to the help given by the western countries. Furthermore, political Communism has nothing at all to do with real Christianity, which is not practical or impractical, it is not giving or getting, it is being. G. H. HIGNETT (Devonport).

Sir,—The fundamental difference between Communist and Christian doctrine is that whereas Communist doctrine claims that some day (probably a long time from now) we will have heaven on earth, Christian doctrine denies this and says instead that we must first die and then a selected portion of us will go to heaven while the remaining large portion will be excluded because of sin.

In an area which had put into practice true Communism the states we at present know would no longer exist, until in time the nation states slowly

disintegrated into their smallest components, the communities. The basic governing factor in the lives of the people would be the community, and the local pride of the citizenry, evident in this country, shows that people who live long in the one community learn to love it. This is especially so in the smaller communities where people are able to love both their community and their neighbours.

I am sure that your correspondent has made the mistake of confusing the system, wrongly called Communism, at present in use in the Soviet Union with the so far still theoretical system of Communism. No doubt the correspondent would reply that in the Soviets is found the result of applying the doctrines of Communism to a materialistic world. To counter this I would point out that our late enemies, Italy and Germany, have always been strongholds of Christianity as it is applied in a materialistic world.

CHARLES SINCLAIR

(Wellington).

Sir,—Congratulations to G. H. Holibas on his letter. May I, like him, refer to *The Listener's* interview with Dr. J. Coleman. But may I suggest that Communism by no means shows a monopoly of hate in these days.

Your correspondent aptly uses Christ's parable of the two sons. I would express the opinion that Christ's two parables of the new wine in old bottles, and the new cloth in an old garment, suggest a revolution of society rather than its reformation.

WAYFARER (Auckland).

SHADOW OVER BERLIN

Sir,—You say that Russia is either "larrikin, lunatic, or outlaw; taking pleasure in starving two and a-half million people . . . ; driven crazy by suspicion or fear; or is simply pushing and squeezing and grabbing. . . ." Apart from the fact that there is no question of starvation, you carefully avoid the obvious truth, that Russia is playing, and playing astutely, the same game of power politics that has been the policy of all strong nations for hundreds of years. In particular, the Berlin blockade was the immediate retaliation for the Western currency reforms, which were a contravention of the Potsdam agreement and other pacts. Russia could expel the other Powers from Berlin, but it is a historical fact that Russia is slow to break agreements, even when they have been made void by the actions of others. Because Russia was strong, we

fought the Crimean war against her. For the same reason, we formed with her an alliance which was one of the factors leading to the first world war. Because Russia was strong, Germany was permitted to rearm and to attack her neighbours. Because Russia was strong, Poland would not release us from a promise to protect her, so we had the second world war. We should demand a better reason before letting editors talk us into a third.

VARIAN J. WILSON

(Christchurch).

EXPORT OF BRAINS

Sir,—Although I quite agree with your correspondent H. Shaw that farming to-day, and especially in this country, demands the concentration of good brains as well as good brawn, I do not think he quite understands the full import of the term "Export of Brains." In brains, as in all things, there must be standards, and although

More letters from listeners will be found on page 32

all types are necessary in a community, and far be it from me to belittle any type whatsoever, it has always been recognised that those possessing the greatest intellectual ability have the highest grade of brain, and it is to this type mainly that people refer when they bemoan the Export of Brains from New Zealand.

Perhaps the greatest reason why the intellectual brain is rated the highest is because that type is self-contained; whereas the more practical brain needs as a rule both material and physical strength to give it self-expression.

S. P. RUDKIN (Christchurch).

MANX BROADCAST

Sir,—Please allow me to express appreciation of the broadcast from Station 12M by the Auckland Manx Society's choir. I am sure it was very much enjoyed by all listening-in Manx people, as the music was really traditional to the Isle of Man.

LISTENER-IN (Auckland).

OLD VIC SEASON

Sir,—When the Old Vic Company left England for Australia it was understood that a visit to New Zealand would also be made. Can you tell me, please, if this visit is to be, or not? The Australian papers and radio have made much of the company and its famous principals, and many New Zealanders are eagerly awaiting definite news of their tour here. For some time now there have been rumours to the effect that, owing to shipping difficulties, this latter tour is off. Some months ago, I remember reading that an "advance" manager for the company was in the country, but it is since then that the rumours have been spreading.

There will be many provincial theatre-lovers like myself who will have to make arrangements a long time in advance to attend the plays, so, if it is possible, could you put us out of our misery as regards the big question, and also inform us if there are any dates and places fixed yet for the performances?

PLAY GIRL (Blenheim).

(We are advised that the Australian season has been extended. No further information was available when we went to press.—Ed.)

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

WITH the next issue of "The Listener" all regular subscribers will receive a special free supplement designed to help listeners to follow the changes in frequency and call-sign which will affect New Zealand radio stations on and after September 1. Printed on suitable card and of a size convenient for ready reference, the supplement will feature a receiving-set dial, showing new tuning positions for NZBS stations, and the call-signs by which some of them will be announced. Extra copies of the supplement (price 2d) will be available from all newsagents and booksellers.