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satisfying, occupations, and that they are reluctant to pursue higher studies since academic and technical qualifications do not receive enough recognition. While believing myself that there is a strong case for the negative, I felt that this speaker was blaming recent educational changes for effects actually produced by quite different social factors. Before the series ends, I hope a secondary school teacher of languages is allowed to express his views, which should make an interesting contrast with those of the teacher already heard.

—J.C.R.

## Polite Despair

STATION 3YA put on a Fourth Anniversary programme for the first atomic bomb dropped in anger. Six people spoke; two scientists, a school-teacher discussing the changed military prospect, two men starting careers, and a mother of young children. None of them was very happy about our chance of survival except the mother, who made a brave attempt to convince herself that through atomic power man would reach undreamed of heights of achievement. Was it a representative gathering? Not altogether. It was a cross-section of the articulate section, which is accustomed to express its polite despair of any conventional solution to the problems set by the atom bomb. One member of the panel did speak of the need for a new sense of spiritual values, and mentioned Albert Schweitzer's conception of reverence for life. But it is not much use talking of spiritual values and then turning back to polite despair. Spiritual values connote being rather than talking, and until people are ready for a little being, the problems of atomic energy, which are materially insoluble, will remain a matter for polite despair.

—G. leF. Y.

## Unpleasant but Salutory

"MUST I remember?" I am tempted to plead with Hamlet, when faced with a programme of such bitter extraction as *British Agent*, the true story of the experiences of Wing Commander Yeo Thomas after capture by the Germans. It was a most unpleasant programme, but a most necessary one. Forgetting is easy and all too soon, for comfort's sake, we start convincing ourselves that the Gestapo is something you see on the films, and increasingly old films at that. It needs something like this, something stamped with the Spartan accuracy of the British documentary, to remind us that millions died even less gloriously than on the battlefield. During and immediately after the war programmes of this type could stir us only to impotent rage and sorrow; now I feel there is more we can do about it, even if it is only the negative course of being on our guard to prevent the rise of conditions here as well as abroad which foster the beastliness in man instead of the good.

## Frightfully BBC

I HAVE heard nothing quite so like the Western Brothers as the recent re-broadcast from 2YA of a discussion between the BBC's John Davenport and Aldous Huxley on Huxley's much-reviewed *Ape and Essence*. Admittedly

the interview is ten months old, but when we consider that Handley's topicalities manage to survive an even longer time-lag with vitality unimpaired we are forced to the conclusion that this interview was merely another example of that death-in-life (a by-product of the atomic age) which Mr. Davenport and Mr. Huxley discuss with such glib gloom. But perhaps "discuss" is too strong a word for Mr. Davenport, whose favourite method of prolonging the agony is a depressed and dying "Yes-s-s-s," though to do him justice he was responsible for what may be considered by connoisseurs of leading questions as a perfect gem, "I suppose you've got some rather beastly things to say about bacteriological warfare?" Sure enough, Mr. Huxley had.

—M.B.

## Sons of Art

ALTHOUGH the studio recital by the Dunedin R.S.A. Choir was advertised as consisting of one work, the short Mendelssohn cantata *To the Sons of Art*, it proved to consist of a half-hour of mixed part-songs, between two of which the Mendelssohn was unsuitably sandwiched. A far more effective arrangement would have placed the Mendelssohn last, rightly reserved for the place of honour and a fitting climax. The choir was in fine form and sang with clean attack and an ease and gusto, in the part-songs, which comes with long familiarity with the music. The Mendelssohn, a setting of words by Schiller, was given a dramatic presentation with impressive use of light and shade. Full credit must go to the choir for its clear enunciation; every word was audible—possibly due to the fact that this was a studio performance, and not a relay from a public concert.

## Australian Music

THE Australian composer John Gough has a lot to say about his *Sundowner*, which may be heard performed by the Westminster Orchestra in a recording of a BBC London Studio Concert. Briefly, he maintains that it should be possible to produce a music which would be recognisably Australian, as there is music which we recognise as Hungarian, Scandinavian, and so on; that the nature of the soil must have its effect on habits of thought, and that in style and idiom composers must necessarily express something of themselves and their environment. The composer offered his *Sundowner* suite as an example of what he meant. It remained for the listener to judge whether he had achieved his object. Is this idiom typically Australian? Possibly. Percy Grainger found the Australians a musically sentimental race, and this work, in spite of a modern idiom, has its moments of romantic sentiment. But surely the way to produce a typically Australian music is not to set out consciously to do so. I can't help feeling that the typically Australian music (and John Gough admits that it is a long way off yet) will come, when it does, as an accidental by-product of minds which were concentrating on their music as music, and not as a conscious expression of nationality.

—D.S.

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