LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

GERHARD WILLNER

Sir,—I have, I am afraid, found Mr. Willner's playing of the Mozart piano sonatas disturbing. Mozart demands a very great deal from a performer, but the absolute minimum demand he makes is for clarity, and this is just what, to my mind, Mr. Willner does not give him. The runs which should be strings of pearls sound to me more like glass beads; the climaxes come with a roughness which might be in keeping with Beethoven's "Sturm und Drang," but which to me sound un-Mozartian. Now this opinion of his playing I might have kept to myself except for one fact: checked by the score, Mr. Willner shows a disregard of Mozart's dynamic markings which I can only characterise as amazing. Take, for example, his performance of the sonata K.283. As I followed this a doubt came into my mind that I was not judging Mr. Willner fairly. His playing disregarded so many of the expression marks that I thought that possibly my edition was one of those sprinkled liberally with dynamics introduced by a meddling editor. I could not be certain, for through 30 years' use the outer pages of my copy have long since gone. However, when I checked my edition with the Kalmus Edition, which is completely unedited, I found that the dynamics Mr. Willner so cheerfully disregards are Mozart's own! For example, in the first movement, the contrast of piano and forte in bars 31, 32, and 33 was simply overlooked, as it was later in the movement where the passage is heard again in another key. The similar contrasts which enliven the last movement and add a piquant quality to the rondo at bars 65 and 89, and in the middle of the last section, were made nothing of whatever. These are the details which make up the quality of Mozart's canvas, without attention to which no broad interpretation can possibly be acceptable.

D.M. (Wellington).

BROADCASTING AND DEMOCRACY

Sir,—As "C.V.B." rightly says, "there are growing numbers of civilised people who are not Christians." Has it ever occurred to him that this fact, for which secular education is largely responsible, may have something to do with the present state of western civilisation? That civilisation, by the way, is the product of Christianity, not of the thousand other philosophies which "C.V.B." regards as equally good.

"C." would have me discuss spiritual problems in terms of persons and things, without mentioning abstract theories. Unfortunately it cannot be done, for the issues are abstract, and so are the competing theories. He asks what I mean by God. I use the word in its traditional Christian sense of a supreme intelligent Being upon whom the universe depends for the totality of its being. As for the creation of spiritual values, we men of the west can do it, *pace* Dr. Munz, only on the basis of Christian principles.

I must thank Mr. Sinclair for his helpful advice about brushing up my logic, but I renew my acquaintance with the subject more frequently than he realises.

Since the subject under discussion is Christianity, not Calvin or Franco, I am not obliged to defend either of these gentlemen. I do hold that the ideas of the great secular thinkers since the Renaissance lead logically to Marxism, if that is what Mr. Sinclair means by "groping towards Marx." If he cares to read Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, he will be able to follow the sequence of ideas without having to use his "seven-league intellectual boots."

Here in brief is the argument to prove that secularist liberalism is transitory and leads to Communism. Secularist liberalism holds that the individual is himself the ultimate end of human life and it thereby splits human society into a myriad of egocentric units. If every man is an end unto himself, other persons must logically be subordinated to that end as means. This repulsive egoism is destructive of human society and ultimately suicidal for the individual, who can live a fully human life only in society. Thus secularist liberalism leads to Communism—the view that the ultimate end of the individual is to promote the welfare of society—by reason of its own inherent contradiction. Mr. Sinclair says this deduction has nothing to do with either logic or experience. If he is not able to follow the logic, he may yet have the deduction confirmed for him by experience.

There is a grim irony in the present situation. When the Church was strong, the State could be kept more or less in its place. Secularism raised the battlecry "Ecrasez l'infame," and now it finds itself face to face with Leviathan.

G.H.D. (Greenmeadows).

Sir,—Although I heard only one instalment of the *How Things Began* series, I gathered that it was based substantially on the Darwinian theory of evolution. Your correspondent "Omicron" states that "a substantial body of opinion among research workers in the fields of science had moved irrevocably away from the positions which the series took for granted." Could he oblige by quoting the names of some of his authorities, the scope of their work and any of their books that are procurable in New Zealand?

INTERESTED (Invercargill).

LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Sir,—Perhaps you will allow a farmer a little comment on your recent article on this subject. The "drift" complained of began when civilisation began, and it is likely to continue as long as civilisation continues to advance. Men earn their livelihood where livelihood is available, and while farming has remained the one source of livelihood in the country, the sources of livelihood in the city have grown and multiplied till they defy computation. Civilisation means division of labour, and while every advance in division of labour creates new work for the town it often takes old work from the farm. Primitive man produced his whole requirements on the land: the modern farmer produces almost nothing, in the finished form, on the land. Even less than two centuries ago Burns and his neighbours, with their families, grew their wheat and worked it into bread, reared their sheep and worked the wool into clothing. Now the farmer starts these operations, but the main body of the work is carried out in the centres of population by workers in a great variety of callings. Similarly, every machine that is invented to aid the farmer diminishes the labour required on the land, while its manufacture creates additional work to be done in the towns.

Even if this "drift," apparently inseparable from progress, could for a time be reversed by making farm life more attractive, how would the change affect the farmer? Increased output would lower the prices of farm produce, while the diminished output of all the farmer buys would raise its price and the farmer would be doubly impoverished. With city life thus made more attractive and farm life made less profitable, would not the "drift" return? Life in the city must be made more healthy and normal. That is the only true remedy.

J. JOHNSTONE (Manurewa).

A TROLLOPE SERIAL

Sir,—In the August 4 *Listener, The Lillian (Lilian?) Dale Affair* is described as "a radio version of Anthony Trollope's novel *The Small House*." I think there must be many Trollopians besides myself whom this travesty of Trollope's book has provoked to anger. The novelist's characters and setting have been shamelessly tampered with, and misused to present a sordid melodramatic thriller. My main purpose in writing is to warn listeners who have not yet made the acquaintance of the real and beloved Anthony Trollope that this misnamed "version" is a mockery of the book whose title and characters have been filched. It is an outrage to link it with the great Victorian's name.

By contrast, Dickensians are in luck with the radio version of *Dombey and Son* if it maintains the standard reached in the first instalment, to which I had the pleasure of listening the other day. In this case we are given the real Dombey, and can follow it book in hand if we wish.

A.H.R. (Dunedin).

DON QUIXOTE AND DON JUAN

Sir,—Any doubts which the writer of "A great Spaniard" *(Listener,* July 29, page 26) may have as to the pronunciation of "Don Quixote" should be dispelled by listening to the talk mentioned in his paragraph. Though it would have been quite understandable if Senor de Madariaga had given the name its Spanish pronunciation, he uses the standard English pronunciation throughout the talk. However, during the week preceding the presentation of the talk at 2YA, certain announcers referred to the book as "Don Kiehoatie," according to my ear. Clearly they did not stop to consider how they would pronounce "quixotic" or "quixotry" if called on to use either of these words.

Both before and since then, the same announcers have treated us to "Don Hwon," where the printed programmes referred to Don Juan. Shades of Byron! Admittedly, the difficulties arising from the broadcasting of foreign names are not easy to overcome; but it seems a pity to add to them by discarding pronunciations which are recognised by all authorities to belong to Standard English.

STANDARD ENGLISH (Wellington).

A Note to Correspondents

SO many letters are received for publication in "The Listener" that it is impossible to find room for all of them. In making a selection it is often necessary to exclude interesting material. Correspondents can help a great deal by writing briefly. A long letter means that someone else is being crowded out, and letters which are held over quickly lose their topical value for a weekly journal. Readers are assured that exclusion is not intended to indicate that their letters are unsuitable for publication.

WEEK-END PROGRAMMES

Sir,—I have every sympathy and a fellow-feeling for "Long-suffering Hospital Patient." I feel that there should be one station entirely for sport, so that those interested can listen in all day without interruptions. The programmes on a Saturday are a veritable torture. The poor office-worker and housewife at home preparing week-end meals, and doing all the chores, instead of having bright or soothing music, is forced to listen to mushy songs and discordant music interrupted every few minutes by sports or racing results.

Sunday used to be a day to look forward to, with music of a high order and choirs and good English bands, and orchestras, etc. Now, however, "sport" has invaded the programmes and even the raucous voices of those reporting the games. When the sport fans have most of Saturday relegated to them, besides reports at various times during the week, I think it only fair that the housewife might have Sunday in peace, quite apart from the religious point of view. There should surely be the one day in the week when people's thoughts should be raised to a higher level.

ANOTHER LONG-SUFFERER (Mount Maunganui).

(More letters from Listeners will be found on page 19)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Mark Levy (Wellington): Much too long.

Serial Fan: Your complaint will be passed on.

Altiora, E.E.M. and *L.G.:* The subject has been closed.

O.B-W. (Wanganui): Afraid it could not be published again.

Mrs. R.A.R. (Mt. Somers): Your suggestion is not practicable.

Mrs. E.J.B. (Whakatane): Many thanks. Your points have been noted.

L. Bishop (Christchurch) and *E.deL.* (Timaru): Your letters are being passed on.

Drum Major (Hawera) and *Interested* (Motueka): The Programme Department is looking into these matters.

London Organ School (Wellington): The NZBS has had the recordings mentioned in stock for some time and they are broadcast at frequent intervals.

Miss L. E. Smith (St. Albans): The information you want is not available here, but could be supplied by the producer—George Edwards, c/- Columbia Gramophone Co., Sydney, N.S.W.

H. W. Ward (Wellington): *The Listener* explained how that series of broadcasts was compiled on February 4, 1949, and the first broadcast was largely a tribute to the author and the historical research work she had done.

Hebe (Christchurch): Both stations are privately owned, but subsidised by the NZBS. Station 2XM's hours of transmission are: Mondays and Thursdays, 9.15 a.m. to 10.0 a.m., and 7.0 p.m. to 10.0 p.m.; Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 9.15 a.m. to 10.0 a.m.; Saturdays, 9.15 a.m. to 10.0 a.m., and 8.0 p.m. to 10.0 p.m.; Sundays, 7.0 p.m. to 11.0 p.m. Station 4XD: Wednesdays and Thursdays, 6.0 p.m. to 11.0 p.m.; Sundays, 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.