

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

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THE HUMBLE BUMBLE

Sir,—I was interested in the remarks of "Irideus" concerning bees in his fish story in *The Listener* of November 15. Part of my interest was due to the fact that "Irideus" was wrong in most respects. In the first place, the humble bees he talks about are not humble bees, either in name or fact. They are bumble bees, and anyone who says otherwise, doesn't know what he is talking about. Further, it is not the bumble bee which can sting only once, but the common worker bee. The latter appears to become unfit for further service once it has pressed home an attack, but the bumble bee, like a Vickers Wellington, can sting and keep right on stinging if need be. The bumble bee generally minds its own business, pursuing a policy of live and let live, but it can be anything but humble if antagonised.

I once saw a young and foolish cat attempt to bite a bumble bee, mistaking it for its favourite tit-bit, a juicy blow-fly. The cat raced around the yard in increasing circles, foaming at the mouth. The bumble bee flew serenely away. However, I will admit that I once put one over a bumble bee. Working in the garden one fine summer's noon, I stopped to ease my aching back for a moment. Noting a bumble bee doing the rounds of a snap-dragon plant (or antirrhinum, alias "bunny"—please yourself), I idly picked up one of those furry little black caterpillars and popped him inside a snap-dragon flower. Presently, the bumble bee landed on the flower, and in his business-like way, poked his head inside. Then he went hard astern with a loud panicky buzz, and took off in great haste, sounding as he disappeared over the hedge exactly like "The Flight of the Bumble Bee."—"PADDLE-STEAMER" (Auckland).

MODERN MUSIC

Sir,—I have been an interested and often indignant reader of your modern music controversy. Now I must "glut my ire."

L. D. Austin is apparently a learned man, but he arouses me with his blustering verbosity and cynicism, his cold, sometimes crude, logic, which deceives nobody, and his bigoted condemnation of the tastes of his contemporaries.

I agree with the sentiments expressed by "Bing-Eddy." I am justifiably incensed that people who ought to know better should "insult the tastes" and intelligence of the generation to which "Bing-Eddy" and I are both proud to belong. It is sheer ignorance on the part of these people to assert their intolerance of modern music.

Mr. Austin's conclusion that modern music is a manifestation of paganism is sweeping but not at all authentic. If it were, then people who enjoy modern music, and especially those who play it, would also be pagans or have pagan leanings. I wonder if Mr. Austin has heard of Kay Kyser. This man, who conducts America's No. 1 Dance Orchestra, is one of the finest and most righteous persons one could ever hope to meet. He finds, as I and many others do, that modern music is recreation for the soul and morally uplifting to the mind. Paganism is far removed from these.

Then I wonder if Mr. Austin has heard of Artie Shaw and his orchestra. Artie leads one of the ten best bands in America, and he, for the generation he represents, shows that he is not intolerant of the views and tastes of others. I wonder if Mr. Austin has heard his orchestra play Puccini's "Serenade" and "The Prelude in C Sharp Major."

Classical music will always have a place in the world and a listener and learner in me. This place will be distinct from that held by modern music, but its exponents will never question the right of classical music to exist.—A. TODD (Picton).

IT HAPPENED IN WALES

A STRIKING incident from the career of General Smuts is described by H. C. Armstrong in "Grey Steel." During the last war there was one period when the situation in England was critical because of strikes, particularly among the Welsh coal miners. The Navy reported that it would be unable to keep the battle fleets at sea; all movements of food, troops, and supplies would be paralysed. The Germans would have won.

Smuts went to meet an immense crowd of miners at Tonypandy. They were out for trouble.

He had prepared no set speech; he had left to the inspiration of the minute what he should say. As he had left London, Lloyd George had said to him, "Remember, my countrymen are great singers." He would use that.

He leant a little forward and the crowd was still and tense.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I come from far away. . . . I do not belong to this country. . . . I have heard in my country that the Welsh are the greatest singers in the world. Will you first sing me one of the songs of your people?"

A second of surprise and of hesitation, and then a man struck up with "Land Of My Fathers," and the whole immense crowd, tier on tier, joined in as one tremendous choir and with an intense passion and fervour.

When they had finished there was silence. They were quivering with emotion, the anger out of them, and he spoke quickly before the mood passed. "You know," he said, "that your comrades in France by tens of thousands are risking their lives in the trenches . . . but the trenches are not only in France, but here in Tonypandy . . . and I am convinced that here in Tonypandy you will defend this Land of your Fathers."

The men went back to work. The strike was over. The Navy got its coal and kept the high seas open for the Allies.

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TIGER'S TEETH FOUND IN ENGLISH CAVE!

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KOLYNOS DENTAL CREAM

1/3 2/6

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