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## No Fight, No Fun

WHEN an Irishman trails his coat he expects someone to tread on it. If there is no fight there is no fun. An Australian will cast reflections on your ancestry and wonder why you don't shout him a drink. What is an insult, he asks, among friends? So when Mr. Winston Rhodes, an Australian lecturer in English at Canterbury College, told us the other day that we have no culture—no literature, no music, no philosophy, no thoughts of our own in New Zealand—it is not at all likely that he was trying to be offensive. He was merely repeating what New Zealanders themselves have told him, and forgetting that what sounds rather interesting when we say it ourselves, rather generous and brave and big, may have a different sound altogether when some one else says it at us. We must not take offence where none was meant, and we must not deny what is so plainly true. But when Mr. Rhodes tells us to give up imitating Britain and start playing the sedulous ape to America it is like advising a drunkard to give up whisky and take a course of methylated spirits. America is a great country, a very great country; if there could be such a place it would be the greatest country in the world. But if our trouble is that we have not yet learnt to write poetry or paint pictures or compose music or think, it is not to America that any wise teacher would direct us. America in three hundred years has produced one great poet. It has produced—but not trained, developed, or kept—one great painter and one supremely great sculptor. It has given the world no great composer. It has produced two philosophers, both of the same period, whose minds have left a permanent mark on world thought. America is what New Zealand itself is, only in a vaster way; too young, too imitative, too comfortable, too rich, and too raw to produce the flowers that blossom in human dust.

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

### WHERE WAS THE RING?

Sir,—Is it not customary for a married woman never to remove her wedding ring, even when bathing the baby? At any rate, the infant in your advt. was in bed and apparently asleep, so the ring should by that time have been replaced on her finger.

Do not reply by saying that she has not had time to do so, because she would have been better employed doing so, instead of gazing soulfully into space.

You have roused my curiosity as to whether there are any married women (inquiries among my friends resulted in negative answers), who remove their wedding rings when bathing the baby or putting their hands into water. Of course, if they have other reasons for removing the ring, that is another matter.

M. C. GILLINGHAM.

P.S.—I was not on the look-out for faults, but with the woman's hand in such a position, the omission struck me forcibly as soon as I opened that page.

Sir,—Here is one young modern who won't be wearing a wedding ring any longer. It is a coincidence that on the same day as reading Miss M. C. Gillingham's letter in *The Listener* I lost my wedding ring. Yes, you're right; I took it off to bath my baby. And I think it would be ridiculous to put my husband to the expense of buying another, so ringless I will go. Will I be counted as immoral?

In any case, of what significance is a wedding ring? One does not have to produce a wedding certificate to buy one as far as I know, so what? If it is true, according to a recent newspaper paragraph, referring to Australia, that the making of wedding rings is classed as an essential industry, the position is becoming more than absurd. I'm going to revolt.—BARBARA GORDON (Wellington).

### CHURCH SCHOOLS

Sir,—In a recent 22B session, "Any Questions?" the question was asked whether the "seeds of class conflict" were sown in Church schools." Speaking as an ex-pupil, and also as a member of the staff of a Church school, I can say "Certainly not!" and I should be surprised to hear that "class conflict" was either taught or tolerated in the schools of any denomination in this country.

N. WILLIAMS (Wanganui).

### CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM

Sir,—"Christian" quotes the Scripture as follows: St. Matthew depicts Christ as a King, Mark as a servant, Luke as the Ideal Man, John as the Divine Son of God. The third of these quotations upsets "Christian's" attempt to discredit socialism as a Christian principle. An Ideal Man would not live in luxury while his fellow countrymen lived in squalor and semi-starvation, such as occurred in New Zealand during the slump. The campaign for Christian order that does not make socialism its foundation is doomed to failure; when extremes of wealth and poverty exist, Christianity is impossible to the majority.

The beacon light to which the eyes of countless millions are turned is socialism allied to practical, not make-believe, Christianity. Has it not been written in the Holy Bible that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

6/3317 (Ruapuna).

### COMMUNISTS AND CHRISTIANITY

Sir,—Your correspondent "Veritas" states that Stalin is an atheist. Is it not a fact that all members of the Communist Party are atheists? Or am I wrong?

ENQUIRER (Auckland).

### SPEAKING CANDIDLY

Sir,—May I make a suggestion? For some reason best known to the distributors, there are many films which have been reviewed during recent months and have earned your reviewer's A1 marking (the little man clapping), yet which have never been shown publicly. One is apt to forget the review rating by the time the film is exhibited. My suggestion is that a short list of these unshown films be shown in a box at the head of the weekly column and kept up-to-date, deleting such films as have been shown and adding others as reviewed. I refer only to the A1 ratings. I realise how precious space is, but possibly one inch, double column, would fill the bill weekly.—LITTLEMAN CLAPPER (Wellington).

(A useful suggestion.—Ed.)

### NATIONAL FILM UNIT

Sir,—Could Mr. Andrews please find time to tell us in plain words what the National Film Unit has done in its first year, and what it hopes to do in the future, without bringing in photogenic surfaces, hierarchies, interstices and other verbiage?

EUPHUES (Wellington)

[Mr. Andrews says in reply: "I am sorry that Euphues dislikes my theories and my English. In our first year we made 80 good short films; in the future we shall make hundreds of better films. I cannot speak plainer than that."]

### NINTH SYMPHONY

Sir,—I would like to congratulate the NBS upon a recent broadcast of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony from 3YA. Apparently shunned because of its length, this wonderful work had been too long neglected. It is to be hoped that it will be performed at regular intervals from now on.

And further request. I am sure many listeners besides myself would like to hear broadcast what recordings are available of Beethoven's Mass in D. I cannot be more precise in my request here, because I do not know what parts of the work are at the disposal of the stations.

A. J. DANKS (Christchurch).

### ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

T.E.A. (Tokanui). We do not set, or answer, the questions. Sometimes, not often, we report them. Have sent your letter to Question Master, Any Questions? Section, 22B.

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