

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

## THE JUNGLE AT SCHOOL

Sir.—I noticed that two points of view were expressed about the BBC programme *Forenoon* in your issue of January 29—one by a regular contributor to *Radio Review*, and the other by a guest critic. This was all to the good, and it helped me to understand why my own feelings about the programme were divided. I suppose most of us like to meet these schoolboy characters, but we don't always see that some of them are stereotypes. Even Fanshawe, the "expert in injured innocence and fabricator of insurance schemes," seemed to belong more to books than to real life.

What bothered me most, however, was the amazing eloquence of all the schoolmasters. If there are men in the schools who can speak like this, I have failed to meet them. It might have been credible if one master had rhetorical gifts; but when everybody, from the Headmaster downwards, poured out words with Celtic fervour and gusto, I began to suspect that we were hearing one voice only, the voice of Gwyn Thomas, who wrote the programme. And yet it would have been hard to stop listening to *Forenoon*. The babel of young voices in the background, the sound of the bell, and an occasional classroom joke all helped to build up the feeling of nostalgia which explains the success of school stories with older people—unless, of course, they happen to be teachers. T.A.B. (Upper Hutt).

## A BOOK REVIEW

Sir.—I am sorry to find that the usual standard of your book reviews is not maintained by "P.J.W." in his comment on Alan Paton's second novel, *Too Late the Phalarope*, in the issue of January 25. Two points at least reveal the fact that the reviewer has not even read the book carefully and seems to have missed the main significance of the story. The accusatory note was not written by the subordinate and did not refer to the condemned action, and there is no final desertion by the wife.

There is remarkable artistry in the consistent style, reminiscent of Mary Webb's *Precious Bane*, and true appreciation of a human dilemma. In portraying the basic problem of the father-son relationship, Alan Paton throws fresh light on his earlier book, and deals ably with the question "Why do sons go wrong?" Each of the men to whom Pieter attempted to unburden his soul missed his need, and did not make it possible for him to talk out his problem.

I would recommend this discerning author to those who wish to deepen their understanding of the intricacies of human relationships, and hope they will not be discouraged by a misleading and inadequate review.

ENID F. COOK (Christchurch).

Sir.—I must confess that my experience on reading *Too Late the Phalarope* was different from that of your reviewer, and I would be sorry if his inaccurate account deters admirers of *Cry the Beloved Country* from reading this second book.

*Too Late the Phalarope* carries us to the heart of Afrikaner colour prejudice, and shows Paton's extraordinary understanding of an attitude that politically he is pledged to oppose. But it is more than a tract on race relations; it is an adventure into the deep waters of

human motives, into the torment that can destroy a strong man against his will.

There is poetry in the Biblical language and a rare subtlety in handling what might be thought by some to be a sordid episode. It is slow moving as the Tallis Fantasia, and as irresistible; but you must settle down and listen.

W. L. COX (Christchurch).

Sir.—Your reviewer "P.J.W." has done less than justice to Alan Paton's novel *Too Late the Phalarope*. I recommend it to all who seek further understanding of the South Africa of today.

I gained the impression that "P.J.W." wrote in haste and this is supported by the errors of fact in the review (e.g., It was Japie Grobler, Pieter's friend, who wrote the mysterious note "I saw you," and it was in relation to another incident, not that implied by your reviewer).

The material may appear "thinly stretched out" and "become tedious" to a busy reviewer reading against time, but to this "average reader" it did not appear so, and in fairness to Alan Paton I would advise others to read this fine novel and judge for themselves.

R.D.L.S. (Rangiora).

## "A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC"

Sir.—The programme printed in *The Listener* for 2YA's classical hour at 2.0 p.m. on January 15 included "A Little Night Music," which presumably is intended as a translation of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. This mistranslation has so frequently appeared in *The Listener* and been heard from announcers, that it does not seem out of place to observe that the compound noun "Nachtmusik"

means "serenade," "Kleine" being, of course, an adjective meaning "little" or "small." However, since it is not possible to speak in English of "a music," it follows that "little" in the phrase "A Little Night Music" must be regarded as a noun of quantity, as in "Will you have a little meat?" Let us hope that the NZBS will not continue to lend its authority to this ludicrous mistranslation in printed programmes, and will require its announcers to call the work simply "A Little Serenade."

MOZART LOVER (Wellington).

(The translation our correspondent dislikes is widely used, is not indefensible, and seriously misleads nobody. And why is it "not possible to speak in English of 'a music'?" Wordsworth said it ("A music sweeter than their own"); Ruskin said it ("All one's life is a music"); Archibald MacLeish said it ("I hear far off, at some forgotten door, a music"); and there have been many others, back to Shakespeare.—Ed.)

## FRENCH NAMES

Sir.—From 4YA in the Women's Session on the morning of January 8, an interesting talk on the subject of the French Presidency was given. I could not hear the speaker's name, but it was obvious that he was quite ignorant of the language of the country about which he was speaking. His attempts at pronouncing the names of these public men were lamentable. His script should have been read by someone knowing at least the rudiments of French pronunciation. P.F. (Christchurch).

## LIONEL MONCKTON'S MUSIC

Sir.—I wish to express appreciation of the broadcast from 2YA on January 2 of excerpts from Lionel Monckton's works. For me it was an hour of pure pleasure, and I am sure for thousands

## ELEGY AT THE YEAR'S END

At the year's end I come to my father's house  
Where passion fruit hang gold above an open doorway  
And garden trees bend to the visiting bird:

Here first the single vision  
Entered my heart, as to a dusty room  
Enters the pure tyrannical wind of heaven.

The coal burns out; the quiet ash remains  
That tired minds and coarsened bodies know.

Small town of corrugated iron roofs  
Between the low volcanic saddle  
And offshore reef where blue cod browse,  
From husks of exile, humbled, I come to your fond prison.

At an elder uncle's deathbed I read the graph  
Of suffering in the face of country cousins.

These have endured what men hold in common,  
The cross of custom, the marriage bed of knives;  
Their angular faces reflecting his  
Whose body lies stiff under the coverlet.

One may walk again to the fisherman's rock, hearing  
The long waves tumble, from America riding,  
Where mottled kelpbeds heave to a pale sun;  
But not again see green Aphrodite  
Rise to transfigure the noon. Rather the Sophoclean  
Chorus: *All shall be taken.*

Or by the brown lagoon stand idle  
Where to their haunted coves the safe flocks go,  
And envy the paradise drake his brilliant sexual plumage.

For single vision dies; spirit and flesh are sundered  
In the kingdom of no love. Our stunted passions bend  
To serve again familiar social devils.

Brief is the visiting angel. In corridors of hunger  
Our lives entwined suffer the common ill:  
Living and dying, breathing and begetting.  
Meanwhile on maimed gravestones under the towering fennel  
Moves the bright lizard, sunloved, basking in  
The moment of animal joy.

—James K. Baxter.

## THE WEEK'S BIG GAMES

### ALL BLACKS

v. North-Western Counties, February 18 (N.Z. time): Score and scorers—YAs, YZs, 6.0, 7.15 a.m.; ZBs and ZZA, during breakfast session. Eye-witness account—YAs, YZs, 8.15 a.m., 12.33 p.m. Summary with commentary excerpts—YAs, YZs, 9.15 p.m.

### N.Z. v. BARBARIANS

Cardiff, February 21 (N.Z. time): All YA stations will remain on the air from midnight on Saturday, February 20, till the close of play. There will be a full, direct commentary beginning about 2.15 a.m. Score and scorers—YAs, YZs, 6.0, 7.15, 8.0 a.m.; ZBs and ZZA, throughout morning. Edited commentary of about one hour—YAs, YZs, 9.0 a.m. Eye-witness account—YAs, YZs, 12.33 p.m. All Black newsletter—ZBs and ZZA, 9.15 p.m. Summary with commentary excerpts—YAs, YZs, 9.30 p.m.

### "CRICKET"

v. Western Province, first day, February 13 (N.Z. time): Scoreboard and summary—YAs, YZs, 7.15, 8.0, 9.0 a.m. and 12.33 p.m.; ZBs and ZZA, during breakfast session.

v. Western Province, second day, February 14 (N.Z. time): Scoreboard and summary—YAs, YZs, 7.15, 8.0, 9.0 a.m. and 12.33 p.m.; ZBs and ZZA, throughout morning.

v. Western Province, final day, February 16 (N.Z. time): Same arrangements as for first day.

more listeners, who like myself make no pretence to any high standard of musical attainment, but have been accustomed to singing in choirs and musical societies, and have thus acquired some rudiments of musical appreciation. Could we have more programmes of this quality? PHIL HARMONIC (Palmerston North).

## "DAD AND DAVE"

Sir.—I was glad to read in *Open Microphone* (February 5) that we may not yet have heard the last of *Dad and Dave*. It is easily the best serial to have come from Australia; and in spite of its long life, and some inevitable changes in the cast, it has kept its interest and has even succeeded in reaching the standards of a folk story. The characters are exaggerated versions of people that are known in New Zealand as well as in Australia. I think, too, the serial shows how much longer we can be interested in human and credible situations than in a succession of breathless escapes and impossible adventures. SNAKE GULLY (Otaki).

## LEARNING TO LISTEN

Sir.—Can any of your readers suggest how a friend of mine can best set out to become a lover of classical music? My advice was that he should sit alone in a room every evening, tune to any YC station, have a book in one hand and *The Listener* in the other. Sooner or later he would find there were several composers who would compel him to stop reading.

K. R. GROVES (Timaru).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

T. R. Livesey (Taupo).—Have sent your inquiry to our DX contributor.

J.N.D. (Dunedin).—Sorry, a little too late. The point had been made by earlier correspondents.

F.B. (Takapuna).—Where so many were good, it seems unwise to single out one for such full treatment.

Concerned Observer (Drury).—Letters should be confined to broadcasting topics or to material printed in *The Listener*.

John Watson (Waiheke).—Such re-arrangements (from double to single episode) are at times unavoidable.

G.N.W. (Dunedin).—Delay in replying is regretted. The episode dramatised and explicitly acknowledged the part played by the workers in the movement.