

FLUORIDATION

Sir,—I have just received a document from America on this subject written by F. Battelle, entitled "Fluoridation Unmasked," and here are a few extracts from this revealing pamphlet:—"Fluoridation has been used in countries taken over by dictators to immobilise the people's will and ability to think. It has been used for this purpose in Russia. It is also used by trainers of wild animals to induce docility in their jungle beasts and cause them to be more manageable. Rena M. Vale, former Communist Party member, who has been an active anti-Communist for over 20 years, has stated that 'fluoridation' of drinking water is known in communist circles as a vehicle of Red warfare, to be used for outright poisoning of the population and/or reducing the mentality and will of the population so it will not resist communist domination. The method to be employed to put fluoridation over on the people is to beat the drums for the fraudulent reason of 'protection of children's teeth,' and to see to it that the public does not learn that fluorides affect the brain and nerve cells to such an extent that initiative is reduced and the personality becomes docile and cow-like."

Dr. Charles A. Brush, Director of the Brush Medical Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts, states: "Extensive pharmacodynamic research from reliable sources leaves us speechless when we think of a plan to fluoridate the water of the entire nation. Acute or chronic, as the effects are sure to be, it can only be classified as mass murder. Fluorides are protoplasmic poisons. They have never been approved medically, only venturesome doctors using them. The following are some of the harmful toxic effects of fluoride: 1. Damage to the brain and nerve cells. 2. Harm to the reproductive organs, with the resultant lowering of the birth rate. 3. Affect the thyroid gland and damage the liver. 4. Create a higher incidence of bone fractures." Dr. Leo Spira, M.D., Ph.D., etc., noted authority on fluorine poisoning, states: "As a medical man, I have no hesitation in stating that the principle of adding a potent poison, such as fluorine is, to the public water supplies runs counter to every clinical, physiological, and pharmacological doctrine, and should be categorically rejected by all means at the disposal of civilised man." A.W. (Christchurch).

(We did not believe it possible for Communism to be brought into this discussion. Before the subject is taken any further into fantasy, it might be as well to recapitulate the scientific findings quoted by two genuine authorities at a public meeting in Hastings on May 18, as reported in the *Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune*. The experts were Dr. Gilbert J. Parfitt, head of the Preventive Dentistry Department of the Institute of Dental Surgery, London, and Dr. F. A. Arnold, Director of the National Dental Research Health Service, Washington. Some of the points they made were as follows: (1) Fluoridation of water had been clearly established as offering at least a reduction of 65 per cent in dental decay. (2) Where the fluoride content was below 1½ parts in a million no mottling or staining of teeth occurred. (3) Mottled teeth and dental decay were entirely different things. (4) Fluoride content in the water on the level required for treatment of dental decay had no effect on physique, heart, bones or liver. (5) Water so treated had no taste of fluoride and there was no smell. (6) Fluorides had been known to research workers for more than 100 years. (7) Mothers benefited clinically from fluoridation. (8) Though the greatest benefit was upon children up to seven or eight years of age, older children also derived a substantial benefit. (9) Fluoridation of water was the most effective method so far devised for the human absorption of fluoride.—Ed.)

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Sir,—My critic "M.F.McI." in dismissing my short letter, proves nothing himself. He considers Professor Leuba's surveys useless. Francis Bello in *Fortune* gives the results of a recently-completed

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questionnaire to 107 young (under forty) scientists, who were considered by their senior colleagues to be outstanding. "About half were brought up as Protestants; more than one quarter were Jewish; less than 5 per cent came from Catholic families. At present nearly three-quarters of the total have no religious affiliation."

As one who knows a great number of very fine people who deny God, I take strong exception to the bigoted view expressed by Selwyn Dawson, "that men denying God" could use the weapons provided by science to conduct themselves to the frontiers of existence. Dr. E. W. Barnes, late Bishop of Birmingham, who will be remembered for his frank forthrightness, thought otherwise when he said: "The followers of Christ, the first great pacifist in human history, might be expected to wean men from the follies of war. Strangely, they and most of their leaders are silenced. It is the men of science who have clearly seen the tragedy of the present situation and who, to their honour, are, notwithstanding criticism and obloquy, working and speaking for international peace."

At the Science Congress in Auckland, Australia's leading atomic physicist, Professor Oliphant, attacked recent statements by religious leaders who described the misuse of science as a menace to the world. Professor Oliphant implied that the world's sorry state is the fault of the churches for not doing their job better. His attitude towards the Bible is also significantly revealed: "We are told that . . . Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden because they disobeyed the law and ate of the tree of knowledge. It seems strange to me that the exercise of the greatest faculty with which men have been endowed should ever have been regarded as a sin. By a deliberate act, probably the greatest step he ever took, man chose to seek knowledge, thereby setting himself apart from all living things and ensuring his ultimate dominion over the earth. What is called the Fall of Man should be known as the Ascent of Man."

It would appear that many religious adherents are ill prepared both intellectually and morally to face the iconoclastic advances of science, and are obviously distressed at the thought of Comte's prognostication becoming a reality. P. CAMPBELL (Auckland).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

A HORRID WARNING

Sir,—It is to be regretted that you waste space, and presumably money, by publishing the adolescent opinions of one Bruce Mason and invest his pseudo-satire with the dignity of a "Review." Some time ago this opinionated young man disparaged the world-acclaimed masterpiece of Sutton Vane and spoke with insufferable patronage of the mentality of the playgoer of the 1920s (something else of which he obviously knows nothing). Now he does the same thing about Mr. Axelrod, a modern playwright, and makes the startling discovery that the modern playgoer in U.S.A. and England is just as mentally deficient as he was 30 years ago.

Bruce Mason's "horrid warning" came too late for Hutt Repertory, which recently presented a most successful reading of *The Seven Year Itch*. The play was recommended to us by Mr. Russell Reid—who has some claim to authority—and he and our members showed a most lamentable deficiency of Bruce Mason's Olympian wisdom in that, far

from being bored, we were highly diverted and entertained. We associate ourselves with the thousands of playgoers on both sides of the Atlantic who enjoyed this play so much.

It is fairly evident that praise from Bruce Mason is the hall-mark of mediocrity, and that from a successful theatrical viewpoint, the most desirable attribute would be to confirm his worst suspicions.

L. ASSHETON HARBORD
(Lower Hutt).

MAN'S MORAL NATURE

Sir,—Regarding your leading article of June 4, and Professor Oliphant's statement that there is no evidence of improvement in human morality in five thousands years, I would like to contest that statement. The quoted example of slavery is surely evidence of improvement. If there is anything more immoral than slavery, I would like to hear of it. Yet it was approved by civilised people including the Christian world a little over a hundred years ago; but few would even try to defend it now.

Persecution for religious beliefs was general up to the time of the first Elizabeth and even later, but little of it remains now and that little is disappearing fast. Cruelty to animals aroused no public protest about one hundred years ago. As recently as my own schooldays, stoning fowls to death, flaying frogs in the spokes of a bicycle wheel, and tying together the tails of two cats and throwing them over a clothes-line and letting them tear themselves to pieces were fairly commonplace. Very little of this happens now. Not because of the fear of punishment but because the conscience of both adults and children has been aroused. Maiming as a form of legal punishment, death for a dozen trivial offences and hideous ill-treatment of children and the mentally ill, were accepted as the right thing. How different it is now! If the arousing of the individual and public conscience to the state where people improve in all these ways is not an improvement in human morality, what is it?

Admitted, modern war is more frightful than ever before, but this is due to an improvement in weapons rather than to deterioration in morals. And war is accepted generally as an evil and as immoral; but we don't know how to avoid it. But admitting war to be immoral is a positive improvement. I am convinced that, by the year 2054 humanity will be conducting researches to find out what we thought were bars to world union and to the cessation of wars.

C. V. GODDARD (Dunedin).

("Evidence of improvement" in this or that has no bearing on the point at issue. If men who lived more than 2000 years ago could have ideas which only lately have been carried into practice, they were clearly men whose moral nature was equal to that of the best people now living. The mass inertia which checked their ideas has not disappeared, but has merely changed its front. Persecution for religious beliefs may have disappeared, for instance, but can we say that persecution itself is no longer with us?—Ed.)

"THE FACTS OF LIFE"

Sir,—I have not read C. O. Darlington's *The Facts of Life*, but after reading "J.D. McD.'s" review of it, I should say it provides no end of entertainment for the reader who has an eye for fallacies. Darlington, a competent geneticist, expounds a biological view of history and a philosophy of determinism, because he feels that the facts of genetics leave him with no alternative. Genetic research reveals that individual plastic-

ity is an illusion and this disposes at one blow of Freud's vitalism and those who talk of "free will," not to mention the sterile heredity versus environment controversy.

This sort of thing reminds me of a Pekinese barking furiously at a big Alsatian. In other words, Darlington, a geneticist, is right out of his class when he starts grappling with such problems as these. It is natural, I suppose, that a biologist should be inclined to think that biology has the last word on everything. So biologists need to be reminded now and then that biology is a very lowly science and has nothing really pertinent to say on such problems as the interpretation of history or man's free will. These are philosophical problems and a competent biologist who grapples with them is in dire peril of revealing himself to be a most incompetent philosopher.

Finally, I must say I found the succinct Darlington dilemma: "Promiscuity or Homosexuality" most amusing.

G.H.D. (Palmerston North).

HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Sir,—The Alexander Turnbull Library is compiling a list of Historical, Early Settlers', Pioneers' and like Societies throughout New Zealand. I should be grateful if secretaries of all such societies would send to the Library a brief account of their activities and the scope of their interests. This would facilitate the exchange of ideas and information on matters of common interest.

C. R. H. TAYLOR, Librarian.

"BORIS GODOUNOV"

Sir,—Mr. Jensen evades the issue when he expresses generally accepted facts concerning Rimsky Korsakov's alterations to Moussorgsky's tableaux in the opera. My remarks concerned the universal usage of Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral version, which he decried in the first place. With regard to his venture into the realms of poetry, I have tried hard to emulate his worthy example, but after several cups of black coffee imbibed during a night of desperate endeavour I can only produce:

Dear Ow-en
What a Po-em!

M. T. DIXON (Christchurch).

GAELIC SONGS

Sir,—May I express my appreciation of the excellent BBC feature *Ceilidh*, broadcast recently from station 2YA. I am sure this must have been enjoyed by a great number of listeners throughout the country.

Now that there are quite a number of recordings available in New Zealand of many beautiful Gaelic songs, it is to be hoped that they will find more frequent inclusion in our programmes. An extension of solo piping broadcasts should also be popular—at present they are confined mainly to smaller stations, from which the reception is far from good.

PUIRT-A-BEUL (Wellington).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Music Lover (Wellington).—Names and addresses are required from all correspondents. Cryptic Clue (Christchurch).—Many thanks. Will pass it on.

J.A.M. (Wellington).—Sorry; too long. A.F.W. (Auckland).—June 9, 1953. C. F. Newhook (Tauranga).—(1) The only line to Rotorua is the ordinary telephone line, which will not carry music without serious distortion, so that the links you ask for are technically impossible. The line serves well for speech. (2) The 2YA-2YC-2YX arrangement is the only workable one. Until the small 2YX transmitter became available, the 2YC programme disappeared when Parliament was sitting. It can at least be regularly heard in the Wellington area now.