

BUTTER AND CHEESE

Sir,—The implications of the commentary by Mr. A. J. Danks, printed in your issue of November 19, should not be allowed to go unchallenged. New Zealand frozen butter was retailed at 11d a pound in the United Kingdom, pre-1939. It was 1/6 in New Zealand. The consumer here subsidised the producer, the butter being sold to United Kingdom buyers below cost. With the advent of the war, and subsequent food shortages, our cheese and butter were subsidised by the United Kingdom Government, which subsidy went in part to the producer, showing him for 15 years a good nett profit which he could not achieve in pre-1939 conditions. The balance went to subsidise consumption here. Every pound of butter and cheese consumed in this country for 15 years was subsidised by the British taxpayer.

Now subsidies are off, and the industry is pained because its products do not appeal at a price which shows any profit at all. Butter and the sales thereof in the United Kingdom are referred to here as though all butter were the same commodity. Frozen butter is close akin to high-grade margarine, which, pre-1939, was priced at 8½ pence per pound. Fresh British dairy butter was 1/3 a pound. This latter product is now selling at 3/9, which it is vainly hoped the frozen New Zealand variety will fetch. It would command a price in somewhat the same ratio as pre-1939, about 2/8 retail, which would mean selling below cost. In my view, butter which cannot be marketed fresh, as a luxury, is finished as an economic product, and all those who have charge of the situation here have their heads fully or partially in the sand. Butter and cheese produced in the United Kingdom are no longer subsidised; nor on my present information is cream.

Fifteen years of grace during which our dairy industry could have been organised and geared to the production of high-grade fancy cheese, for which there is an almost unlimited market, have most lamentably been allowed to slip away.

I. R. MAXWELL-STEWART
(Wellington).

UP FROM THE SLIME

Sir,—When I challenged J.D.McD.'s statement that "the fact of evolution has not been sensibly disputed for half a century," I hardly expected him to take up the challenge, because the statement is indefensible. Now Mr. Malton Murray, feeling that the honour of Evolution, his Dulcinea, has been impugned, has charged in to her defence, laying about him to right and left, and creating more confusion with every blow. In the circumstances, argument is difficult, but it may help to clarify things for your readers if I comment on some of the issues raised by Mr. Murray.

An atheist is almost compelled by his philosophy to postulate evolution as a fact, whereas a theist can approach the problem with an open mind, for it makes little difference to his philosophy whether living forms were separately created or evolved from one or a few ancestors. The problem must be solved *a posteriori*, as a question of fact, and proof is a matter of evidence. Many theists, including a number of Catholic thinkers, accept the evolutionary theory. Others—and I share their view—consider that the weight of evidence favours the contrary hypothesis. It is not a question of "hand-picking authorities" or of choosing "scientists of whom one

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approves," but of estimating the worth of scientific arguments. It is a point of interest, too, that most of the facts that tell against the evolutionary theory are to be found in the text-books written by professed evolutionists, though naturally they are not emphasised.

If Mr. Murray has another, and more careful, look at *Human Destiny*, he will find that Lecomte du Nouy was not a Catholic, and almost certainly not even a Christian.

G.H.D. (Palmerston North).

PAROLES DE FRANCE

Sir,—May I, following on the announcement of a new series of *Paroles de France*, express to the Broadcasting Service our appreciation of earlier broadcasts and our pleasurable anticipation of more to come? To hear the voice of contemporary authors, and excerpts from French stage-plays, whether modern or classical, to say nothing of the music included in these programmes, is a delight for which both students and adults interested in the culture of France are very grateful. If no public acknowledgment has been made hitherto it has not been, I can assure you, for any lack of interest or appreciation.

A. C. KEYS,
Professor of Modern Languages,
President, Auckland French Club.

INTELLIGENT PEOPLE

Sir,—“Irish-New Zealander” wonders whether philosophers make a distinction between intelligence and wisdom. Intelligent means endowed with the capacity or faculty of understanding. Right. But understanding what? Are men intelligent if they understand that two and two make four, but don't understand the theory of relativity? Human intelligence, it seems to me, is a complex consisting of an inherited faculty and a degree of training or development of that faculty; in other words, for current purposes, intelligent people are educated people. But it depends on the kind of education. Brend, in his *Foundations of Human Conflict*, says: “Modern education does not encourage clear thinking; it tends more to inhibit independent thought in the interests of certain derived emotions, and in consequence men are credulous, illogical, and easily swayed by shibboleths and catchwords.” If this be true, can we look for a really intelligent populace, not to mention a wise one? Derived emotions often rest upon events in the past, or assertions about events in the past that cannot now be verified, and depend upon the credulity of those to whom statements are made. Large numbers of people are awayed by derived emotions because they accept traditional and current points of view instead of thinking for themselves.

The truly intelligent individual seeks to liberate himself from the packet of derived emotions that have been created in him as a result of impressions made on him when he was juvenile, defenceless and unable to do other than accept the dicta of “authority.” In my judgment, the individual who seeks to do this exhibits wisdom.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).

DAME SYBIL THORNDIKE

Sir,—I am rather afraid that Mr. Maxwell-Stewart is not so familiar with the London stage as he would have us believe. Dame Sybil Thorndike was a London stage personality long before

Saint Joan. I remember her performance of *Medea* at the Duke of York's Theatre before the 1914 war (and what a performance it was!). She also rented the Holborn Empire Music Hall for a season of *The Trojan Women* that won great acclaim. I saw her often in plays by Ibsen and Shakespeare at the Old Vic in the Waterloo Road when I lived in London before the First World War.

ARTHUR CLARK (Taupaki).

THE TEMPLE OF MITHRAS

Sir,—“Argosy” is a victim of the fallacy which marks the reasoning of many evolutionists. A and B are in some ways similar. Therefore B is a developed A, or vice versa, or A and B issue from a common ancestor. In respect of the relationship between Christianity and Mithraism, there are superficial and external similarities, which in no way prove dependence. M. Cumont will not allow any influence of Mithraism on Christianity save—possibly—in respect of a few art-formulas. Reinach's thesis and Lagrange's criticism of it make interesting reading. “Argosy” is imaginative. The fantastic synthesis he has attempted could be judged by one sentence in it, viz., “In fact, Mithra was canonised by the Church of St. Peter,” and all because Mithra is represented as rising from a conical stone. What of the palpable radical differences between the cult of the mythical Mithra and the worship of the historical Christ? Also, it is very probable that Mithraism in the West included among its tenets corruptions of Christian teachings.

One does tend to become impatient with people who dogmatically present guesswork as certain knowledge.

OBSERVER (Napier).

AN ACTOR'S ROLE

Sir,—On page 17 of *The Listener*, November 5, the author of the article “Radio Conversation Piece” writes: “Richard Burton . . . created the hero's role in *The Lady's Not for Burning*.” Surely this is incorrect. Thomas Mendip. I always understood, was the hero, which role was played originally by Alec Clunes in the Arts Theatre, London, in March, 1948, and latterly by John Gielgud in the Globe Theatre, London, in 1949. Richard Burton played the part of Richard in the last-mentioned production, and did not take part at all in the first.

I have noticed quite a few little inaccuracies in similar vein in various of your articles, and in a spirit of constructive criticism would like to point out that such are most irritating to the reader, and are very easily avoided by the author having a very certain knowledge of his or her subject or failing this by referring to a reliable book containing the play. A. M. HUNT (Levin).

(The error is regretted.—Ed.)

“SCOMIX”

Sir,—I have before me a copy of *The Listener* opened at the pages featuring “Scomix.” I wonder just how many readers fully appreciate the sheer brilliance of Mr. Russell Clark's drawings—quite apart from the clever conception of “Scomix”? As one who has for some 15 years been living by commercial art and illustration, I am of the opinion that few artists anywhere in the world could match Mr. Clark's versatility. R. J. Munnings paints horses, Russell Flint paints Spanish women semi-nude, and Lamorna Birch paints trout streams (I'm told he's a keen fisherman). But

no one could accuse Russell Clark of specialising. His sculpture, oil paintings of landscape, his portraits, murals, illustrations and cartoons are apparently carried out with equal confidence.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Clark will stay in New Zealand and not disappear to other lands, as have done so many of our brilliant artists.

WINTON BRISTOW (Auckland).

NEW ZEALAND ACCENT

Sir,—It is my belief that different accents tend to please, irritate or even arouse hostility irrespective of “tone of voice.” The accents of New Zealand radio announcers please me and irritate some politicians, and at least one gold miner to whom they are unfamiliar. An ex-radio announcer working down S. J. Nicholson's gold mine would start with a slight handicap; he would have to overcome the prejudice against his accent.

If Mr. Nicholson cares to tune in to Australia he will notice that their announcers do not speak with the broadest twang in Australia. Similarly the BBC do not advertise the Cockney accent. Neither of these accents is popular enough in its respective country. The same conditions apply to New Zealand.

I think the NZBS have given New Zealand a very high standard of broadcasting, and chosen first-class radio announcers, and I mean first-class by any overseas standards. They cannot expect to please everyone, but I suggest they meet with the approval of the majority.

J.S. (Takapuna).

THE FEMALE FORM

Sir,—Will you allow me to protest against the letter from “Designer” in *The Listener* of November 5? She, or he (I don't think it would be “he” as men aren't so catty) states that when a woman has to get past a WX fitting, which she says is a 32-inch waist, she is past the stage where “glamorous” can apply to her. I will have that person know that I am 5ft. 8in. in height; I have a 28-inch waist; and in order to get length in a petticoat or nightdress, or even a frock I have to take an O.S. for the former (and even that is not long enough) and an XOS in the latter, or resign myself to making them myself—which, incidentally, is much cheaper. No, Sir, that was a very unjust statement. I'll bet the person who wrote that letter was S.W. and gets everything to fit. HOPE AT LAST (Wanganui).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

G. Forrest (Christchurch): The Incidental Music by Beethoven for Goethe's play *Egmont*. A Westminster LP record, WL 5281, not yet released in New Zealand.

David S. North (Wellington): You do not suggest how one network, which was fully occupied for all but a few minutes, was to find the time to do, also, all the fascinating things done in the United States by “four networks and many independent stations.”

Early Bird (Wellington): There are also late birds, and late birds who like talks. When talks series are repeated, as this series will be, the time placement is usually changed.

M.M. and E.J. (Wellington): The Service is considering developing and extending “Let's Learn Maori” next winter, bringing in Maori legends as exercises. These legends embody much Maori lore. Experience suggests that five-minute lessons daily are about as much as listeners can absorb and retain.