

EVOLUTION THROUGH SEX

Sir.—One wonders how much there is in G.H.D.'s suggestion of a connection between naturalistic beliefs and juvenile delinquency. Certainly it does seem, at times, that there is increasing confusion of standards about sex and other moral matters in our society. On the other hand, this may be putting the cart before the horse, for it is possible for one to suppose that people have come to believe that naturalism should be the basic principle in morals just because the older, mainly Christian, standards have become confused.

Not being myself what most people would call a Christian, I would not presume to conclude that all kinds of Christians speak with conflicting voices, but it often seems to me that they are trying to embrace positive moral standards by placing all their emphasis upon what is forbidden. This must often fail as a guide to conduct, especially with the young.

It seems to be a reasonable further doubt, in connection with G.H.D.'s comment, that one's definition of delinquency might be most important in criticising naturalism. If this is so, then there might well be no ultimate standards.

The truth may well be, as I have heard some Christians say, that their apparent conflicts of moral philosophy arise because none of them has yet clearly understood the moral ultimates. One may hope that the position is not worse than this, for without some final principles we would indeed be lost.

T.P. (Christchurch).

BRITAIN AND MALAYA

Sir.—Recent broadcasts by Mr. E. V. Dumbleton and Mr. Malcolm MacDonald drew attention to the threat of Communism in South-East Asia in general, and Malaya in particular. Mr. MacDonald, in justification of British control of Malaya, gave us arguments similar to those used regarding India before 1947—different races, etc. The arguments are not disputed, but he failed to mention a most important reason for British opposition to an independent Malaya—it is a major source of dollars for the sterling bloc. This is illustrated in statistics published by H.M. Stationery Office, "Colonial Territories," for 1950-51:

	U.K.	U.S.A.
Malayan Exports	£60.4 million	£117.0 million
All Bt. Colonial Territories	£257 million	£178 million
Malayan Imports	£58.6 million	£10.7 million

In view of the figures can we be sure that besides fighting Communism in Malaya, we are not resisting a genuine attempt by the "terrorists" to terminate British exploitation of invaluable Malayan resources of tin, iron ore and rubber?

A. L. McCULLOCH
(Christchurch).

COMPOSERS AT WORK

Sir.—Owen Jensen would appear to be an acute sufferer from St. John's Wood-itis, a disease afflicting many native-born artists, composers and writers. The most distinctive and distressing symptom of this disease is a belief that the only standards or material on which the creator has to work are those derived from suburbia some 12,000 miles away: "... The composer in New Zealand ... has no evocative reservoir of song and dance from which to draw his ideas. He has inherited no folk material. ..."

This reminds one of the girl overheard in the bus one morning. She was describing to her companion a man she

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had met: "No, he didn't look like a New Zealander. I think he was a Maori."

Up St. John's Wood, N.Z.! Let it never be said that any melodious sound ever echoed amongst our hills and valleys before the coming of the white man and his vigorously melodic and evocative hymn tunes and funeral marches.

GERALD WAKELY (Auckland).

UP FROM THE SLIME

Sir.—Mr. Malton Murray's latest contribution is even further off the point than his previous one. (The point, it may be remembered, is: Has the theory of evolution been sensibly criticised since 1904?) However, it presents so many tempting targets, that it would be a pity to let it go without comment.

I said that if we judge du Noüy on the basis of *Human Destiny*, he was probably not a Christian. Mr. Murray omits the "probably" and then proceeds to refute my contention by quoting a passage from *Human Destiny* which shows that I was right. No Christian would write, as du Noüy wrote: "The so-called Christian virtues are really the consequence of the laws of evolution." If Mr. Murray will renew his acquaintance with the New Testament, he will find that the Christian virtues are received by men from God as a free gift. They include, for example, faith, which is "the gift of God" (Eph. II, 8), and charity, which is "poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. V, 5). The du Noüy who wrote *Human Destiny* may well come within Mr. Murray's "category of religious scientists," but that does not make him a Christian.

Mr. Murray sets up a man of straw: "Those who accept the imaginative story in Genesis as proof that God then created all things as we now know them," and then proceeds to batter him with many questions. The critics to whom I was referring rejected the theory of evolution on purely scientific grounds, and they included such people as a Professor of Anatomy at Montpellier and the Director of the National Museum of Natural History at Paris. If Mr. Murray will read a little anatomy and geology for himself, he will find that science and the scientists don't say all the things that are attributed to them in popular works on evolution.

G.H.D. (Palmerston North).

Sir.—It is regrettable in these days of advanced scientific research that Mr. J. Malton Murray should so challengingly and triumphantly refer to theories which are wholly unscientific and completely outdated. In the realms of human embryology he blissfully refers to gill slits and tails and in palaeontology (which he mistakenly refers to as geology), he seems to infer that, following his climax "Finally," he has said the last word.

There is not space to bring evidence to show how utterly worthless are these theories in embryology, theories which are quite untenable, and which have been abandoned years ago by many of the strongest champions of evolution. Suffice it so say that the coccyx, far from being vestigial, is necessary to provide support for the muscles which control the functions of elimination, and at no time in its development does the human embryo resemble a fish or have gill slits. Regarding the palaeontological record, the supposed continuity, there are great gaps in the evolutionary chain-gaps which have never been bridged and cannot be bridged by any conjuring expert. Continuity has been forged only by

jumping from one phylum to another and by astute and judicious arrangement. Wide inheritable variations within natural species are possible in many cases, but no variation outside the limits of natural species occurs. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that this is not a religious versus scientific controversy, but one of science against pseudo-science.

Mr. Murray writes with assurance and certainty which is not now echoed by many of the great champions of evolution. To substantiate this let me quote at random only two. Sir Arthur Keith: "Evolution is unproved and is unprovable, we must accept it in faith." E. W. McBride, Professor of Zoology in the Imperial Colleges of Sciences, England: "I well remember the enthusiasm with which the Mendelian theory was received when it was first introduced to the scientific world, we thought at last that the key to evolution had been discovered, but as our knowledge of the facts grew the difficulty of using Mendelian phenomena to explain evolution became apparent and this early hope sickened and died. The way that Mendel cut was seen to lead into a cul-de-sac."

Many evolutionists in Britain, France and America whose research collectively deals with every branch of the subject could be quoted, all expressing negative results. The late Dr. William Bateson has even said: "Had Darwin known of Mendel's work, he would never have written *Origin of Species*."

I know that I shall be ridiculed by that common argument, numerical superiority of authority in support of evolution—I can take it. It is truth we seek and weight of evidence counts more with me than weight of authority. Galileo even stood alone. Who was right? Progress towards truth cannot be other than a slow process so long as an obscurantist evolution dominates thought.

NATURALIST (Winton).

MATTERS OF MOMENT

Sir.—The *Listener* has laid on some first-rate entertainment in publishing the despatches of the puckish bard of the South and the mellowing Mencken of Takapuna. Questions of moment, hitherto seen dimly by the public, are searingly illuminated in the thrust and parry of relentless linguistic lucidity. Exchanges of this kind raise another point, too. What is to become of the mags of uncared-for correspondence that has doubtless passed between the literary men of this nation? Are carbon copies kept? Have our scholars, repositories and archive officers got their weather eyes open? Are the pulsations and throbs of a growing body of literature to be crushed heedlessly beneath the feet of footballers and marching girls? Perhaps much masterful writing lies even now in the drawers of a bashful literati.

Plugging in on a landline between these two is an experience I enjoy. More please, Mr. Editor.

READER (Tokoroa).

AN INSPECTOR CALLING

Sir.—Two queries arising from *The Listener* for December 20. 1: Should not "Mr. Interlockiter" in the front page illustration be "Mr. Interlocutor?" The former looks like an advertisement for a patent sort of underwear. 2: Would your film critic F.A.J. throw a little more light on his criticism of *An Inspector Calls*? Paragraph 3, "The dead girl, Eva Smith, is never seen," and paragraph 4, "None is better than Jane

Wenham, who gives a fresh and touching performance as Eva Smith." If your critic can describe a performance by anyone who is never seen, he seems to be gifted with more perception than most of us. M.E.M. (Kerikeri).

(Not much perception is needed to grasp the meaning of the following sentences in F.A.J.'s review: "The whole action of the play takes place in the Birtings' dining room in the one evening, and the dead girl, Eva Smith, is never seen. The film makes her one of the most important members of the cast, bringing the play's conversation about her vividly to life in some of the most effective flashbacks I've seen for a long time."—Ed.)

SPARS FROM HOKIANGA

Sir.—A junior officer on Nelson's flagship, H.M.S. Victory, left a diary in which he states that that ship went into action at Trafalgar entirely sparred with New Zealand kauri in 1805. I quote from memory, but I understood him to state that kauri was first tried out on smaller ships before being used upon a ship of the line. This would infer that the kauri had been under trial for some time before 1805. Unfortunately, I have not the time to search for the information, but the diary mentioned above was reviewed in the *Illustrated London News* some time between 1932 and 1940.

Coromandel Peninsula was named after the R.N. Transport H.M.S. Coromandel, which called there for spars in 1804-6. Probably the Maritime Museum at Greenwich could throw some light on the early spar trade. The cause of this early search for spars was the blockade of the Baltic by Napoleon, which cut off from Britain her supplies of Baltic fir. This search began some time before the actual blockade occurred, as British statesmen saw the probable trend of events. This I have always understood resulted also in the discovery of the Oregon pine. Bligh stated in his reports that everywhere Cook had been and where Bounty followed there was evidence of ships of unknown origin having called at these places in the interim. Kipling's "Lost Legion" found their way about the world in no uncertain manner, but rarely bothered to record their doings, perhaps wisely.

Concerning early Hokianga, I was told in my teens by a man then nearly 90 that there was a gravestone on the shores of the harbour with the date 1796 on it.

W. HUGH ROSS (Huntly).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

HOPE AND GLORY

Sir.—The reaction of J. Malton Murray to the anachronistic sentiments of "Land of Hope and Glory" is felt by numbers of people, including many who are not disposed to apologise in any great measure for the old British Empire. It is, however, most difficult, indeed impossible, to change the words of a national anthem or song. What has become of the second version of "Land of Hope and Glory" that Benson and Elgar wrote, to make the song more appropriate to the times? I have read of this, but never seen it, and I wonder how many are familiar with it. Since Benson died in 1925, this amendment was written quite a while before the present "liquidation" of the British Empire.

By the way, the original was not "Britannia rules the waves," but "rule the waves." Blake's "Jerusalem," which Mr. Murray cites with approval, has become a popular hymn in England with women's organisations.

A.M. (Wellington).