

## SOCIETY AND HAPPINESS

Sir,—I have already had the pleasure of receiving privately two ill-mannered letters from your correspondent F. W. N. Wright, on the same subject which he has broached in your columns. I have no wish to prevent any person from airing their prejudices in print, even at my own inconvenience. But I fear that your correspondent is trying to bamboozle me and himself with heavy Latin. So I will try to translate my statement and your correspondent's into plain English.

This "Increment of Association" I take to be the simple fact that we gain by being together. This is not strictly true, for we get both good and evil from our fellows, and who but God can reckon the account? To be happy we need our fellows or the thought of them; but the more we are under the influence of Society, that mechanical mother we have invented for ourselves, the less we see or know of our fellows, and that little is often the deadpan, doughnut-eyed, clawed and shambling husk of them.

Yet Society keeps alive the memory of what our fathers did and a few of their skills. We remember what we did by proxy; we imagine what our children may do in spite of us; and so man appears to us a creature extended in time, armadillo-scaled, the individual sin sloughed off the collective back. This fantasy is necessary to keep us interested in large social issues such as killing men we have never met and bulldozing mountains into the sea; but it does not really make us happy. Your correspondent says, too, that I meant, but did not say, that we should all have more money. I did not mean any such thing. A persistent preoccupation with money seems to me quite deadening to every other feeling. I would recommend your correspondent to forget the "present monetary system" and take up the study of compost.

JAMES K. BAXTER (Wellington).

## "ARTHURIAN BRITAIN"

Sir,—Maybe there are those who prefer their spring lamb served as colonial goose, and who will wash it down with vin ordinaire rather than savour it with hock, moselle, or chablis. But may such tastes be anticipated in a book review such as appeared in your issue of January 28, where the literary discovery of the first half of this century is passed off virtually as just another version of love and lure in Logres?

The significance of the Oxford Standard Authors edition of the Winchester MS of *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory* is merely economic for New Zealand book buyers. Here is presented for the price of 26/- a text (less Professor Vinaver's copious annotations) which in the Clarendon Press three-volume edition now sells in this country for £9 or so.

*The Times Literary Supplement* of June 7, 1947, begins a two-page review of the larger edition with these words: "It was on July 23, 1934, that Mr. W. F. Oakeshott made in the library of Winchester College the most startling literary discovery of the century—a manuscript of Malory's Arthurian romances roughly contemporary with Caxton's print and independent of it."

Sir Frederic Kenyon, in the correspondence columns of the same issue, writes:

"Professor Vinaver's monumental edition of *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, just published by the Clarendon Press, enables the public for the first

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

time to read Malory's great work substantially as he wrote it, before Caxton edited and printed it."

In view of such statements from such sources, and in view of the factual information available on where and when Caxton set up his presses and what works he produced, I am wondering what your reviewer can mean by saying of the Winchester M.S., "As a publication it may be said to have been a Caxton first."

P. A. CORNFORD (Wellington).

(Our reviewer replies: "Yes, Mr. Cornford is quite right, and I am obliged to him. It is important to make it clear that this is not the Caxton but the Winchester version. As to hock with lamb I regretfully differ."—Ed.)

## U.S.A. AND FORMOSA

Sir,—As usual, Mr. Dumbleton in his *Lookout* broadcast of February 5 showed a refreshing realism. But in his treatment of the United States position in Formosa there was a serious gap. It is true that the promise of the Cairo and Potsdam declarations to restore Formosa to China has never been put into treaty form. Nevertheless, the United States Government treated it as Chinese territory until the middle of 1950. For instance, on February 5, 1950, after Chiang Kai-shek had been driven from the mainland, the President, Mr. Truman, stated: "The United States has no predatory designs on Formosa or on other Chinese territory. . . Nor does it have any intention of utilising its armed forces to interfere in the present situation. The United States Government will not pursue a course which will lead to involvement in the civil conflict in China." The Secretary of State, Mr. Dean Acheson, likewise stated that to deny that Formosa was Chinese territory was a mere "lawyer's quibble."

On February 9 there was a further statement that for the United States Government to seek by any means, including a plebiscite under the United Nations, to set up a non-Chinese administration in Formosa "would be almost universally interpreted in mainland China and widely interpreted throughout Asia as an attempt by this Government to separate Formosa from China in violation of its pledges and contrary to its long-standing policy of respecting the territorial integrity of China."

It was not until June 27, when the 7th Fleet was despatched to Formosan waters, that the United States Government found it convenient to shift its ground and maintain that the fate of

Formosa had still to be determined. It rests with American lawyers to quibble away the inconsistency of United States support for Chiang Kai-shek, as head of the Chinese State, on territory which the United States denies, and Chiang claims, to be Chinese territory.

The United States position in Formosa has no international validity. It was a unilateral American action, frankly based on what are claimed to be the needs of American security. On the basis of United States statements, it constitutes interference in the internal affairs of China.

It seems strangely like hypocrisy for the United States, supported by its allies, armed with atomic power and threatening massive retaliation, to pose as the apostle of peace while it sits tight on this position. In a world threatened with nuclear war the needed restraint should not all be imposed on one side by the threat of the other to loose war without any attempt to deal with the real causes of tension. At the worst, a few weeks of local, non-nuclear civil war—and it is surely agreed that Chiang Kai-shek depends completely on American support—would be better than a day of nuclear war, perhaps on a world scale. Tension will not be relieved by stand-pat on Formosa nor by SEATO pacts, which to Asians—and increasingly to Africans and many Latin Americans—naturally look like attempts to stop them from settling their own affairs.

The cease-fire proposal, covering only the coastal islands, was a rather transparent smoke-screen. A more real contribution to peace would be for such countries as New Zealand to stop bolstering the fantastic American conception of the needs of American security and rather to press for a Geneva-type conference to deal with Formosa on the basis of past pledges and placing the *de facto* government in the Chinese seat in the United Nations.

WILLIS AIREY (Auckland).

## CRISTOPHER FRY'S PLAY

Sir,—Bruce Mason's criticism of the New Zealand Players production of *The Lady's Not for Burning* was an excellently contrived piece spoilt by its lack of balance and his attempt to out-Fry Fry in words. Why should he deal with only the two leading players? One can only assume he thought the others not worth mentioning. However, may I say that *The Listener* and the Broadcasting Service in my opinion are at least the

only sources of regular informed criticism of the arts we have, and I venture to suggest they could both improve on what they are doing by providing more, to balance the inherent complacency I find in New Zealand. The broadcast discussion of the same play was spoilt by being too short. The two well-informed speakers appeared to be flitting from point to point in order to cover the play in such short time that it was scarcely fair on either the speakers or the play and players. Why not longer time, and why not the same criticism of music, orchestral or otherwise? We need it.

CRITICISM, PLEASE  
(Wellington).

## OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Sir,—On Wednesday, December 8, 1954, in the *Book Shop* session on the YA stations, I said a few words about Oxford University Press activities. Our London office has picked me up on one small point. I said, "The Press began in 1478—over 470 years ago—and in that time more than 10,000 titles have been published." The publisher points out that we have now some 10,000 titles in our catalogue, and that since 1478 we have published many thousands more.

RALPH GOODERIDGE  
(Wellington).

## LIGHT MUSIC

Sir,—As one of the middlebrows to whom Mr. Price's contribution in your issue of January 28 refers, may I heartily congratulate him on so ably expressing what, I am sure, most listeners feel about such a large part of our programmes. Where he would segregate items designed to suit the intelligence of morons, however, and provoke others to homicide, I would go further and eliminate them altogether, and then surely, in time, the noise lovers would become educated to an appreciation of more worthy and harmonious sounds. I would like to ask what is the method of selecting records for purchase. Are they selected by representatives of the Broadcasting Service or, as would seem to be the case, are the sweepings of the recording factories just bought indiscriminately by the ton?

To me, the world's most offensive noises are produced by very young babies crying determinedly, tin can bands with screeching trumpets, moaning Minnies and tired, sad wailing Willies whose noises seem to be recorded so prolifically in, but not exclusively in, the United States of America, and whose unmusical wails are usually connected with almost unintelligible words—certainly unpoetic words, of sentimental drappiness.

It speaks well for the Italians that, even if they do record rubbish at all, they keep such records at home, and rarely export anything that has no merit; but from the kind of noises referred to above, please spare me. Let me hear the announcer occasionally say, "Listeners, you will not be inflicted with that monstrosity again."

T. A. URWIN (New Plymouth).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

M.B. (Opua): Afraid not practicable.  
T.M. (Dunedin): Correspondence closed.  
(Mrs.) Jean Beattie (Mercer): Not possible at present. Many thanks.  
H. Nicholls (Te Aroha): They are not available for publication.  
I. H. Tanner (Christchurch): The omission was due to a very much regretted piece of forgetfulness.  
J.F. (Gore): A station-produced programme, which will not be circulated. Other stations from time to time produce similar programmes; you could ask 4YA or 4YZ.

## THE BRASS BANDS CONTEST

THE New Zealand Brass Bands Contest will begin at Auckland this Sunday (February 27), and from then till it ends the following Saturday there will be regular broadcasts from NZBS stations of results and selections from performances. The first of these will be heard on Sunday afternoon, when 1YA will broadcast from 2 o'clock selections from the Hymn Test. Other broadcasts from this station will include results throughout the week as they become available, recordings from the contest at 8.30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and a broadcast from the quickstep from 2 o'clock on Saturday afternoon.

Listeners in other parts of the country will hear results several times a day from YA and YZ stations, and winning performances each night from Monday to Saturday from YA stations, 3YZ and 4YZ at 9.30 p.m. The first broadcast of results will be at 6.40 p.m. this Sunday from YA and YZ stations, except 4YZ. From Monday to Friday results will be broadcast each day at 6.15 a.m. (after the News, from YA stations only), 7.18 a.m. (after the Weather Forecast), 8.10 a.m. (after the News), 7.0 p.m. and 11.15 p.m. (after the News, YAs and 4YZ). From Tuesday to Friday results will be broadcast also after the 12.30 p.m. Weather Forecast. The only links for results on Saturday will be at 7.0 p.m. and 11.15 p.m. (YAs and 4YZ). Results will be broadcast from Commercial stations throughout the week as soon as possible after they are available.

Recordings made at the contest will later be broadcast from National stations in other parts of the country, and also from Commercial stations, mainly in their Sunday morning band sessions.