



KATHERINE MANSFIELD AND FRANCE

Sir,—Having raised academic eyebrows at the cataract of errors in the French extract quoted in Mr Middleton's article on Katherine Mansfield (*Listener*, February 1), I consulted the *Nouveau petit Larousse* (1952 edition) myself. But Mr Middleton has quoted Larousse with scrupulous accuracy, errors included—and there are at least five, including one in French grammar. A letter has already gone to the French publishers suggesting corrections for future editions. (A similar step was taken successfully some years ago, to ensure that the Kiwi was described as native to New Zealand, not Australia.)

At the same time Mr. Middleton can scarcely have seen in Paris bookshops those odd titles that he quoted, for two reasons: *Bliss* appeared in French as *Félicité* (without any article); and *Prélude* (also no article) has never appeared separately in French, as far as I am aware, but figures in the same volume. I possess the original French editions (both 1932) of *Félicité* and of *La Garden-Party* (article correct this time).

It may be of interest to add that *La Garden-Party* was re-published when I was in France last year in the popular series of publications called *Le Livre de poche*, which corresponds roughly to the English Penguins. Extracts from the *Journal*, the *Letters*, and other stories have also appeared in French.

The question of "K.M. and France" is too large to be discussed here. The best synthesis, as far as I know, is still the one by P. Citron that appeared some 16 years ago in the *Revue de littérature comparée*. In spite of Citron's well documented article the appearance of *La Garden-Party* in such a popular and comparatively cheap form rather gives the lie to his statement that the French are "beginning to forget K. Mansfield."

A. C. KEYS (Auckland).

STANDARD ENGLISH

Sir,—I am grateful to Ruby S. Clift for her interest in Standard English. If, however, she will do me the honour of glancing once again through what I wrote, she will perhaps notice that I drew an implied distinction between Standard English and "educated" English. I wished to make the point that although most New Zealanders speak slackly, not all "educated" Englishmen speak Standard English.

I fear that I must regard Miss Clift's claim that children in contemporary England enjoy full equality of opportunity as a considerable exaggeration. As John Strachey says in his recent book *Contemporary Capitalism*, "The main mass of the less skilled British wage earners still live lives cramped and narrow indeed, as compared with the lives which the British middle classes demand for themselves as a matter of course. The wage earners still have housing which varies quite arbitrarily

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from the excellent to the abominable, stunted educational opportunities, horrible urban environments, and bleak poverty in old age."

In a country where the pattern of the social pyramid is set by an hereditary monarchy that is maintained in great splendour, and political power is in the hands of a committee of Old Etonians, one might expect the gross inequalities of wealth and privilege to be mirrored in the speech of the inhabitants; and I think we find this to be so. However, I was at some pains to indicate that English society is not only divided into broad social classes: it is also a "caste" system. Distinctions are deliberately maintained between the various grades, levels and groupings within the non-proletarian section of the population. It would never do, for instance, for country people to speak like suburbanites, or for men from the "best" public schools to exhibit exactly the same mannerisms as do those from the not-so-good schools. Speech, in such a caste society, takes on a sort of totemistic significance and function. In consequence, although all these people are "educated," not all of them speak Standard English. One hears grossly affected and distorted speech at times from Armeah Naveh or Ehah Fawce types, from Oxford and Cambridge, and from BBC announcers. Technically, these distortions are produced by clipping or drawing, booming or whining, constricting the larynx or putting a plum in the mouth. I see no reason why New Zealanders should copy these antics. But they should realise that their own speech is, in general, much uglier. Standard English is based essentially on the proper use of the "organs of speech" considered as physical instruments. We do not admire the violinist who can play only four notes, and those wolf-notes.

A. R. D. FAIRBURN (Auckland).

THE DREAMING ISLANDS

Sir,—In the absence of Mr David Goldblatt, now some 12,000 miles away and thus probably deprived of a sight of *The New Zealand Listener*, I am constrained to comment on your editorial "The Dreaming Islands," contributed by M.H.H.

Your leading articles have often refreshed one humble reader by their quality and objectivity—why then this somewhat petulant outburst against Mr Goldblatt? I am loath to think it was because he had the effrontery to describe our New Zealand landscape as "extremely ordinary" yet "eerie" or that he spoke of our "shanty towns." Many widely travelled people from the northern hemisphere have expressed rather similar views to me. After all these are surely matters of individual opinion; as M.H.H. so sagely remarks, "we do not possess the landscape." Why then the pother?

Can it be that the cause of your seeming ill temper lies in the fact that, both while in New Zealand and in his London address, Mr Goldblatt found us too regimented and too docile about it—too anxious to emphasise security in a land which Providence has clothed with so much opportunity—too smugly proud of our bureaucracy and our quasi judicial bodies: in a word, too much like a country of half-baked socialists? Perhaps M.H.H. was leaping to the defence of these things when he wrote of

Mr Goldblatt's "somewhat peculiar views on liberalism" and made no attempt to specify the "peculiarities."

We may be "The Dreaming Islands" but I would hazard the prophecy that unless some less self-satisfied attitude than that apparent from M.H.H.'s contribution is adopted towards the warnings of such as Mr Goldblatt, we may well suffer a nightmare in our sleep.

H. SALTER NICHOLS
(Auckland).

MUSIC IN THE DARK

Sir,—The article on picture orchestras in your journal of February 25 must bring many nostalgic memories to the over-40's. As Mrs Drewitt says, "People used to go to Everybody's to hear the orchestra," and what a galaxy of talent passed through it—the conductor, Mr W. J. Bellingham, a very musical man; Irene Morris, Norma Middleton, Florence Millar, Joe Mercer (violinists); Harold Beck, the cellist who was in New Zealand recently, Dorie Middleton (Mrs Drewitt) also a cellist, Dorothea Bellingham and Bonnie Young (pianists), (the latter has often been heard from 1XH and played the Emperor Concerto in Hamilton two years ago); Ernest Jamieson, flautist; Mr Sinclair, clarinettist, who was killed when his car hit the Dunedin Express at Cutler's Road crossing in Riccarton just an hour or so before he was expected to play at night; Herb. Fox, cornet; Clarrie Crawford, drums, xylophone, etc., who was reported to have studied them in the U.S.A.—and what a first class job he made of it!

Every week the principal items to be played by the orchestra were advertised in the column below the picture advertisement, and things like *The Bartered Bride* and *L'Arlesienne Suite* became familiar to us. The majority of people would never have known them, as there were no radios then.

At the Crystal Palace, under Mr Alfred Bunz, I specially remember Gladys Vincent, Francis Bate and Maud Ashworth. Last but not least there was that select little trio at the Strand composed of Harry, George and Pauline Ellwood.

I'd gladly go back to the old silent days with the lovely music, no blare, and be able to follow the picture with no American dialect to translate above all the noise. And we could really enjoy a comedy and laugh till we rocked and rolled without being turned out.

EX-CHCH (Palmerston North).

NOT UNDERSTOOD

Sir,—Although a parody, the poem "Not Understood" by A. R. D. Fairburn in a recent *Listener* has hit the nail on the head, and, we hope, into the coffin of the blankety-blank blank verse which a certain clique of word meddlers has put before the public as poetry during the past ten years. Several recent pointers suggest that at last this spate of rhymeless, scansionless, jerky, unintelligible jargon which has passed for poetry, is coming to an end. It may have ended earlier had the critics banded together and been more vociferous. Those who appreciate intelligible verse, say the whimsical, wry subtleties of Arnold Wall or the ballads of natural poets such as Lester Masters, have been very patient. They have been patient with the editors who have printed the modern stuff and with the poets, some of whom have had

the nerve to read their tangled word groupings over the air, or at public readings. I have, however, not heard that at the readings the poets have also explained in plain words what such poems meant.

However, the modern arrangement-artists have not used up all our words yet, although they have twisted some of them pretty badly. Surely there are some poets with eyes to see and ears to hear who will interpret life today, whether humorously, nobly, or even cynically if they wish, in a way that we can understand.

BERNARD TEAGUE (Wairoa).

PERIOD OF SILENT PRAYER

Sir,—I'm all in favour of Mr A. R. D. Fairburn's proposal that the "period of silent prayer" on Sunday nights be taken literally. I would suggest: omit the chimes and dongs and the "music"; let it be one full minute's unbroken silence—a thing I sigh for on some other radio occasions than this one.

After all, this "music" is only the tailcadence of Walford Davies's *Solemn Melody* played sobstuffingly on a Wur-litzer organ. Not that I'm against these instruments, either. I'm in fact all for a Foort on a cinema organ as long as he keeps off serious organ music such as this.

The "music" well deserves the Fairburn it got.

F. K. TUCKER (Gisborne).

VICTORIA ("VITTORIA")

Sir,—I have noted with interest the spelling "Victoria" in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*, alluded to in your comment on my recent representations. The name "Victoria" also appears in the well-known "Groves" Musical Dictionary. On the other hand, two eminent English musicians (Sir Walford Davies and Henry G. Ley), as co-editors, have published this composer's work under the name "Vittoria". For nearly 20 years "Vittoria" has been familiar to Christchurch Cathedral congregations (printed accordingly in the Service lists from time to time), and it so happens that "Vittoria" appears in both City newspaper advertisements today (February 23), in relation to the anthem "O Quam Gloriosum" set down for Sexagesima Sunday. W. H. WARREN (Timaru).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

G.F.R. (Auckland): Sorry; could not fit it in.

I.B. (Titirangi): Much appreciated: Will pass it on.

R.J.N. (Auckland): "Mid-Ocean," by Robert Farnon. From a special theme-disc not available for purchase.

L.H.S. (Wellington): Sorry, the rearrangement you suggest would not be practicable at present.

Horo: A letter cannot be printed unless the address is mentioned.

Progress New Zealand (Tapanui): Comments noted with appreciation. The programmes you mention are not available to the public.

