



### BOY ON A DOLPHIN

Sir,—The review of the film *Boy on a Dolphin* which appears in your issue of August 2 reminds me of a letter which seems to prove that while the ways of boys and dolphins appear to have remained unchanged during the last 1900 years those of seaside housekeepers have altered materially. I quote from Dr C. B. Allen's translation of *Pliny's Letters*—second edition, page 60.

"Pliny to Caninius. I have come upon a story which, though true, bears all the marks of fiction. . . The person who told it to me has a high reputation for truthfulness. . . There is in Africa a colony called Hippo near the sea. Hard by is a navigable lagoon from which an estuary issues in the form of a river; this ebbs and flows alternately according to the rise and fall of the tide, either advancing to the sea or returning to the lagoon. People of all ages congregate here and amuse themselves with fishing, sailing or even swimming, especially boys, to whom leisure and play are a temptation. They think it a great and glorious thing to swim out into deep water; he is the victor who leaves both the shore and the other swimmers farthest behind. In this sport one boy bolder than the rest was making for the opposite shore. A dolphin came up to him and went first in front of the boy, then behind him, then swam round him, and at last took him on his back, set him down, took him up again and carried the frightened lad first towards the deep water, then turned to shore and brought him back to the shore and his companions.

"The story spread through the town and everyone crowded round and gazed on the boy as though he were a prodigy, asked him questions, listened to what he said and repeated the tale."

The letter then goes on to say that the dolphin returned every day and encouraged the boy to play with it. The people lost their fear: "They came close to the dolphin, played with him, stroked him as he let them. . . All the magistrates of the neighbouring towns flocked to the sight, but their arrival and stay was a fresh drain on the slender finances of the little community. At length the place began to lose its air of peace and seclusion. It was decided that the centre of attraction, the unfortunate dolphin, should be secretly killed. What a flood of pathos you will pour on this tragedy, how you will embellish and dignify it! And yet there is no need to add any imaginary detail; it is enough to tell the naked truth without suppressing anything. Farewell."

This letter was written towards the end of the first century. Pliny was 18 when he was an eye-witness of the destruction of Pompeii in A.D. 79.

J. G. APPLETON (Te Karaka).

### HOW SOFT CAN WE GET?

Sir,—That the people of New Zealand, and, for that matter, many other countries, are soft, there can be little doubt, and not even a blind man could fail to see why. Insufficient regular muscular activity or pride in physical ex-

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cellence are the primary causes. Slovenly postures and smoking have brought about deficient breathing, which, when properly practised, is the greatest single factor in physical endurance.

The great paradox of the nation's diet is that while calorifically it is the world's highest, nutritionally, it is close to starvation level. The high incidence of lung congestion is due almost entirely to the mountains of devitalised carbohydrates that are consumed daily. Analysis of the dietary of polio victims would almost certainly show a deficiency of vitamin B. The increased occurrence of cancer in recent times might be very well related to the much higher consumption of refined, denatured foods. Unhealthy teeth and gums are sure signs of protein, mineral and vitamin C deficiency.

The present negative attitude that ill health is a sad misfortune will have to be replaced by the positive idea that good health is the primary object of life and only attained by the conscious practice of known principles.

JOHN LESNIE (Auckland).

### "OWLS DO CRY"

Sir,—It has been suggested that in certain parts of my writing, Mr Glover might accompany me on an old guitar. I shall be honoured for him to do so, but first must arrange an audition, to which I shall invite my reviewers. Although there will be refreshments (liquid and solid) Mr Oliver need have no misgivings, for pikelets will not appear on the menu. Also I would never dream of asking him to cook them, for he seems to associate them, confusedly, with ovens. He owes an apology to Amy Withers and Aunt Daisy.

I do hope the audition will be successful and that I shall be able to persuade Mr Glover to sign a contract; for I am so grateful for the interest shown in my work, and am not averse to any suggestion of musical accompaniment. I almost forgot to say that one or two of the Dark Gods will be invited, to give the occasion a literary atmosphere, and in each corner of the room I shall put a juicy symbolic pie where the reviewers may gather to play at Little Jack Horner (the fashionable review game). I only hope that I have sufficient medical knowledge to artificially inspire those who are choked with plums; or to recommend common forms of therapy for those who go mad trying to play inconsequential tinkertailor with the plum-stones.

Ah, when will my guests learn to eat the pie that is put before them, even if its patches of bad cooking make them suffer from indigestion?

JANET FRAME (London).

### MENTAL HEALTH AND SICKNESS

Sir,—Whenever I suggest to an adult audience in New Zealand that it is possible to bring up children successfully without subjecting them to much in the way of physical assault, my comment is greeted by gasps of incredulity. In pained amazement my audience express their horror at yet another of the crazy theories held by psychiatrists.

I was not surprised, therefore, to read Barbara Brewer's attack on the views of a colleague. May I defend him by pointing out that in the time allowed he could not possibly detail all the evidence available to support his moderate plea for permissive child rearing? Her demand for studies of "the whole population" shows a complete lack of any appreciation of the time and effort re-

quired for even a limited study of human personality, and is certainly not "appropriate behaviour" by anyone's standards.

Her philosophical speculations about the nature of life are important and interesting, but quite irrelevant to the question of "adaptation to life as it is," which is a matter of getting along with one's fellow human beings. Ideas about causation vary, but although a significant number of children showered with infected sputum do not develop overt T.B., this does not disprove the theory that tubercle bacilli are a cause of tuberculosis. If she is interested in this problem may I suggest that she read the report of the Mid-Century White House Conference on Personality in the Making?

ANOTHER OF THEM  
(Dunedin).

### MUSIC FOR DANDY DICK

Sir,—Your correspondent Taigee is accurate in every particular; I played the music in Auckland and Wellington only. But in fairness to the NZBS, and to the author of the article, I would suggest that the statement "all the music" referred to *all the notes*, rather than *on every occasion*. The recordings used for the third act when Miss Stephens was on the stage, I did myself at IYA. And since the record is being prepared with such exactness, may I mention that the extremely witty and sophisticated music was composed by Douglas Lilburn, and I welcome the opportunity, at this late and wholly unexpected hour, of paying tribute to his formidable gifts in this field.

BRUCE MASON (Wellington).

### WALKING THE GAUNTLET

Sir,—I read with interest an article in your paper of July 19 on survival training, headed "Walking the Gauntlet," and was somewhat amused when, having read of the elaborate scheme for the training of airmen, I glanced at the photograph depicting two of the airmen (hiding out). In my humble opinion these two had already signed their own death warrants. I refer, of course, to the cigarettes both trainees appear to be smoking.

One assumes from the text that the exercise is being conducted in simulated hostile jungle country and even an alert Kiwi soldier can smell cigarette smoke from a considerable distance in damp bush. It is a fact all too little known that many a British and colonial soldier lost his life to an alert enemy through indulgence in the "soothing weed," and it is widely known among ex-P.O.W.'s that at least one famous escaper who had reached the border of a neutral State was apprehended simply because the local German defence officer smelt what to him must have been a "fragrance divine" wafting from a near-by forest fringe. The point of similarity here is that many hours of painstaking work had gone into preparing this man for his attempt to escape, his command of the language was perfect, and his civvy clothes had to be seen to be believed.

THE SCORP (Auckland).

### INCH CLUTHA AND STIRLING

Sir,—I am at present engaged in gathering material for a historical booklet concerning the settlement of Inch Clutha and Stirling, in South Otago. Would any of your readers who possess records such as official documents, old letters, diaries, etc., be kind enough to allow me the use of these? Any such material would be treated with care and returned promptly. I would especially

appreciate any illustration of the second Inch Clutha School, built in 1867 and washed away in the 1878 flood.

ALMA M. RUTHERFORD,  
Cannesby, Inch Clutha,  
Kaitangata R.D.

### STATION 1YD

Sir,—We would like to voice a protest against the proposed commercialisation of 1YD. That this move is not popular with the listeners is made apparent by the fact that in three days 400 people have signed a petition against it.

PHILIP CROOKES,  
WYSTAN CURNOW,  
PETER WATSON,  
BARRY WILSON (Auckland).

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Valerie Skinner (Auckland): They were written for radio, and to the best of our knowledge have not been published in any other way. But we shall make inquiries.

R. O. Matches (Oamaru): Thank you. The Mermaid Press, Box 481, Wellington.

C.F.C. (Otorohanga): Not available commercially.

Mary D. Bowlen (Wellington): The series was broadcast by YC stations last year between April and August. 1YC initiates the second playing, which will reach Wellington programmes in the last quarter of this year or the first of next.

Four Ears Pricked in Vain (Motueka): It's a question of time. If a little is lost, it has to be picked up again to maintain the punctuality of programmes.

C. Clayton (Auckland): It is a little soon to start that argument again.

Lover of Real Music (Christchurch): No recordings available.

F. K. Tucker (Gisborne): A recording label was misread when the announcer's script was being typed for him. You would have written with less asperity about announcers, perhaps, if you had known, or recalled, that it is the announcer's usual task to read a script prepared by others. If there are errors in it, they may be of a kind easy to detect and correct; more often, they are not. The preface to Samuel Johnson's Dictionary is worth re-reading.

Mrs Mary Robb (Nelson): Much appreciated. Will pass it on to the writer.

Mrs Mudlark (Milton): Afraid might be actionable. By now perhaps you will have seen the writer's further explanation.

Interested Listener (Ashburton): They are all Friendly Road choirs conducted by Uncle Tom. The broadcasts from 1ZB are "live"; those from 2ZB and 3ZB are recorded.

Plastic Foam (Napier): Questions may be sent to IYA, Auckland.

Conrad Bollinger (Wellington): Too late now to open a correspondence on that subject.

Peter Hammond (Hastings): There are no plans to introduce F.M. broadcasting in New Zealand. This system has some advantages over A.M.; but there are disadvantages—for instance, F.M. allows no wide secondary service area, which is very useful in New Zealand. Europe has introduced F.M. because satisfactory service on the medium-wave broadcasting band is no longer possible, frequency allocations to stations being over-congested. Such congestion does not exist here. NZBS transmission standards are maintained at a high level, to the advantage of listeners who care to install high-fidelity receivers.

J. Carr (Wellington): You're quite right. Hereafter, in those circumstances, the acknowledgment will be as to "A.B. and others."

Dylan Fan (Wellington): The BBC version is available to stations now as they request it; the commercial one will not be played again till late next year.

Mary E. Matheson (Dunedin): Thank you. Still available, but the recording is likely to betray its age. Possibilities will be discussed with 4YA.YC.

Up, Girls and at 'em (Te Puke): Sorry to spoil it, but letters must be related to broadcasting or to topics raised in *The Listener*. And no politics please.

