



## THE CHICKEN-HEARTED

Sir,—I think that R.M.D. and also C.W. Waite have entirely missed the point of my letter, a point which was also indicated by other correspondents. The various types of phenomena under discussion have so far never been adequately investigated, so that nothing has yet been proved or disproved with regard to them, and in the popular phrase we are all entitled to our own opinions. But in the scientific sense (for these correspondents are intent upon being scientific) nobody is entitled to any opinion at all, until a great deal more research has been carried out. I do not know whether anyone wants to alter the personal beliefs of R.M.D., or even cares what they are, and I am certainly refraining from mentioning my own (for fear of being a total bore). It was not in order to be factually convincing that I wrote, but to indicate that this discussion, or any other discussion for that matter, can profit by being carried on objectively, amiably, and with all possible intellectual integrity.

Differences of opinion can enrich a discussion provided that the basic aim is to elucidate the truth and not merely to mow down all opposition. In a debating club, where all is in fun, it is clever and amusing for competitors to utter sweeping statements and make deliberate use of logical fallacies to sidetrack the unwary listener, but these tactics are debarred to people who are claiming to be scientific. The pursuit of scientific truth demands an attitude of heart-searching humility, scrupulous accuracy, and the painstaking exploration of avenues. One finds it impossible to believe that either of our correspondents has made a comprehensive study of the available information on their chosen subject, or put up any real struggle to free themselves of their prejudices. Nor is either of them reasoning logically. This sort of thing is frequently infectious. I hope I may have helped to counteract the infection.

MARION KIRK (Auckland).

Sir,—So considerable are the distortions in the correspondence concerning J. B. Rhine's experiments that I am beginning to wonder if the protagonists have, in fact, read Rhine. And as R.M.D. rightly says, he has been given examples from the whole gamut of para-normal experience.

In general, most criticisms of Rhine's experimental work have depended on alleged falsification of figures. The following press release was made by the American Institute of Mathematical Statistics, at Indianapolis in 1937, and is quoted in *Reach of the Mind*, J. B. Rhine, page 132: "Dr Rhine's investigations have two aspects, experimental and statistical. On the experimental side, mathematicians of course have nothing to say. On the statistical side, however, recent mathematical work has established the fact that, assuming that the experiments have been properly performed, the statistical analysis is essentially valid. If the Rhine investigation is to be fairly

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

attacked, it must be on other than mathematical grounds."

Professors Reiss, psychologist, Hunter College, New York, and Soal, English mathematician, independently undertook experimental work in ESP with the express purpose of disproving it once and for all; indeed, Dr Soal was one of Rhine's most vigorous critics and had written and lectured forcefully condemning the case for ESP. Both were convinced by their own experiments of the validity of the test phenomena and both collaborated with Rhine in further research.

Anyone reading *New Frontiers of the Mind* or *Reach of the Mind* could scarcely fail to be impressed by the elaborate test precautions taken to guard against fraud or unconscious sensory clues. In any other experimental field such overwhelming evidence as has been obtained over a period of many years,

## Tribute to Sibelius

THE National Orchestra of the NZBS is paying tribute this week to the great Finnish composer Jan Sibelius, who died on September 20 in his 92nd year. The scheduled first half of the Orchestra's Wellington concert this Wednesday—October 2—will be replaced by three Sibelius works. They are the tone poem *Finlandia*, the legend *The Swan of Tuonela*, and the *Karelia Suite*. The somewhat "nationalist" flavour of the amended programme is accounted for by the fact that orchestral scores of many of Sibelius's more important works cannot be obtained from overseas at short notice. The items withdrawn are Haydn's Symphony No. 99 in E Flat, and *Death and Transfiguration*, by Richard Strauss.

Wednesday's concert, which includes also Gustav Holst's suite *The Planets*, will be broadcast by 2YC only. The Sibelius works will be recorded, however, and broadcast by all YC stations at 7.30 on Sunday, October 6. This programme will include a tribute by the New Zealand composer Douglas Lilburn.

resulting from work undertaken with detailed scientific care, would have been accepted long ago.

R.M.D. in his original letter—which I unfortunately do not have by me—referred disparagingly, I believe, to Duke University as a small institution to which an oilman's name (and money) had been given. This is the sort of red herring which the cluttered critic trails. I have an aerial photograph of Duke University and would not describe it as small; and it was William McDougall, the eminent psychologist, not the oilman, who was responsible for the establishment of the Parapsychology Department—one section of a not inconsiderable academic centre.

In conclusion, I would like to state that I (here in Hamilton) acted as subject in a series of long-range clairvoyance tests with a colleague of Dr Rhine's at Duke University. The ESP cards were spread on a small couch and exposed for eight hours, and at any period during this time I recorded my guesses on a test chart. These showed statistically significant results. Stencil copies of my own marked record sheets were returned to me. Distance rather rules out the possibility of sensory clues.

The acceptance of the validity of ESP as demonstrated in properly conducted researches, is a widening of our conception of the natural, and not an uncritical belief in the supernatural. It has been

fairly demonstrated that a majority of people display this perception to a greater or lesser degree.

—P. (Hamilton).

## SERIALS AND PLAYS

Sir,—It seems a pity to replace the Monday night play from 1YA with a serial, especially a serial of such an unduly sombre nature as *The Third Man*. May I express a hope that the policy of full-length complete plays will be resumed immediately after the end of the run?

There are plenty of serials already: the complete plays satisfy a need and appeal to varied tastes.

MARJORIE DODD (Auckland).

## "SOMEONE'S ALWAYS DYING"

Sir,—I feel compelled to support T. E. Miles in his objection to the short story of the above title. Oddly enough,



beware! So perfectly had they captured the spirit of provincial smugness and hypocrisy that I, for one, was in danger of taking them seriously. This is an ever-present danger for satirists. However, re-reading and reflection convinced me that not even the combined efforts of Messrs Chadband, Gradgrind, Pecksniff and Co. could have produced better examples.

While in congratulatory mood let me thank you, too, for the consistently high standard of *The Listener* short stories and "occasional" articles. What a pity their intellectual standard is so seldom attained in the broadcast programmes.

F.A.B. (Sumner).

## "THE AUNT DAISY STORY"

Sir,—Could you please inform me—and I am sure thousands of other interested readers—if *The Aunt Daisy Story* is to be published, eventually, in book form? I feel personally that such a saga of one woman's life should not be left in serial form. As history of New Zealand in the making, as it affected the average citizen, it is surely worthy of being recorded in book form.

May I congratulate you on your enterprise in presenting such an entertaining and instructive serial to your subscribers?

D.E.H.

(Palmerston North).

(As announced this week on Page 14, *The Aunt Daisy Story* is to be published as a book.—Ed.)

## THE A. R. D. FAIRBURN FUND

Sir,—Those who have sent contributions will be pleased to know that on September 12, 1957, £1040 had been received. Subscriptions as yet have not ceased coming in. The sponsors of the collection are gratified by this most generous result, and all concerned will feel that it matches the subject.

This money is being made over to Mrs Jocelyn Fairburn and is regarded as entirely separate from any financial or other aspects of the publications which the literary executors are planning. Towards publication expenses, we have £210, £200 being granted by the New Zealand Literary Fund.

For anyone interested, full plate photographs of Rex Fairburn are available from Clifton Firth Ltd., 110 Queen Street, Auckland, at 10/6. Needless to say, all net receipts from this source will go to the Fund.

G.E.F., D.G., D.R. (Auckland).

## PARLIAMENT AND 2YC

Sir,—May I support the letter of "Inconstant Listener" in your issue of September 13? It is discouraging to read of coming programmes of general interest and of good music to be heard on 2YC, and to find them relegated, when Parliament is sitting, to a station whence they are inaudible—certainly to most of us.

This has to happen so often from 5.0 p.m. onwards that it would surely be worth while to find some better means of getting them across.

A.E.W. (Napier).

I read it, although as a rule I don't bother to read the short stories in *The Listener*. I have long considered they are the one serious flaw in your otherwise excellent publication. I suppose the title caught my eye. Anyway, after reading it, my reaction was very similar to that of your correspondent. I certainly did not consider it had any literary merit.

Short stories have more attraction for me than any other form of literature—I have a fair knowledge of those written in the English language; also, of course, of those written in French, Italian, Russian and German. If I have any preference it is for those by Irish writers. I do feel I have some claim to being a connoisseur by now.

The standard of stories broadcast by the NZBS is fairly high, although I wish more time was given to New Zealand writers, of whom there seems to be a few with real talent. However, that is by the way. Printed space, especially in a paper of the calibre of yours, is valuable; use it to better advantage, please.

E.J.S. (Christchurch).

Sir,—Congratulations on the discovery of two such perfect satirists as Robert J. Strong and T. E. Miles, whose comments on Tennessee Williams and "Someone's Always Dying" you printed in a recent issue. But they must

