

Where the correspondent himself does the typing there is no difference—I mean personal, social, or psychological difference—between the marks he makes by tapping a key and those he leaves by pushing a pen; except that the first are

likely to be more legible. Writing and typing are both communication by sign and symbol, and although some make more attractive signs than others, it is of no spiritual significance how they make them—whether they use their hands, their fingers, their toes, or their noses.

There are of course occasions when the correspondent who cannot himself type would be guilty of indelicacy if he failed to write by hand. But only a small proportion of personal letters are so private that it would be offensive to let a third pair of eyes see them; and most people know which those are. In any case it is not those which give most offence, since they are very seldom sent. The chief cause of offence is the old-fashioned and quite groundless belief that taking the trouble to write by hand is more respectful, or shows a greater personal regard for the recipient, than sending the same words by a method that is faster, less laborious, and in far more than nine cases in ten very much easier to read. Old fogey though I am, I reject such nonsense. I don't care how easy the method is at the writer's end if it is not difficult when it comes to me.

(To be continued)

"Britannia Mews"

BRITANNIA MEWS is perhaps the most popular novel by Margery Sharp. It tells the story of Adelaide, who came to the Mews in the 1880s as a young bride, married against her family's will to her drawing master, Henry Lambert. The marriage fails, and Henry dies in circumstances that leave his widow open to blackmail by a neighbour in the mews. It is not until Gilbert Lauderdale, a down-and-out actor, comes to the mews that Adelaide's life begins again. He discovers some puppets made by Henry, and learns how to use them. He and Adelaide built up a prosperous puppet theatre, entertaining their neighbours and becoming very well-known in the process. Then to the mews comes another young girl, a distant relative of Adelaide, who helps her new friend in her struggle for a life of her own. The final episode is set in the Blitz, when Gilbert and Adelaide, then very old, are still running their puppet theatre.

This novel has now been serialised by the BBC, and will begin from the ZBs on Sunday, November 1. The part of Adelaide is taken by Peggy Cameron, who has the difficult task of ageing from a young woman to an old one of 80. It is a dramatic test that is also something of a comeback for the actress, whose career on BBC radio and television was interrupted in 1953 when she went with her husband and four children to Hong Kong. There she made her first acquaintance with the part, in a serial reading



BBC photograph
PEGGY CAMERON as Adelaide in the serial version of Margery Sharp's novel

she did of this novel. Then on her return to England, the part of Adelaide was her first major engagement. It is not the first time she has had to age on the air or, for that matter, to appear an age other than her own. In one children's serial she had to grow from three months to the mid-teens.

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