

STATE LITERARY FUND

Sir.—I read with much interest your special article on the State Literary Fund in the issue of May 11. *The Listener* is to be congratulated on approaching the Minister of Internal Affairs about the Fund's operations. I think the comments on the standard of novels submitted indicate an attitude of the Fund Committee which is entirely wrong. Why should State-subsidised fiction which is purely for local consumption have to be up to the technical standard of English and American publishing houses? Any slight difference which the general public might detect would be compensated for by the additional interest of a familiar background.

Emphasis on technique has become a fetish in the past thirty years—probably, in my opinion, because the majority of publishers' readers are working journalists. In the meantime, the God-given quality of imagination which characterised the Victorians has all but disappeared from world fiction.

Does the sporting public refuse to patronise our tennis and soccer players because they are below world standards? I suggest that the public would become strong supporters of local fiction if they were given a chance to develop a taste for it. If the Committee members want creative fiction of a high standard they must do their part by adopting a creative attitude. I think the general feeling must be that the Fund's four years of patronage has been largely misplaced. NEW DEAL (Wellington).

KILLING A HARE

Sir,—I feel I must make an attempt at replying to the letter submitted by your correspondent "Summa," and quoting the Rev. Henry Davis. As he is said to be "a well-known writer on moral theology," I was amazed, to put it mildly, at the statement "Animals have no rights. . . We have no duties of justice or charity towards them." Then the Rev. Davis a line or two later apparently contradicts himself by asserting that as they are God's creatures we have duties concerning them. I fail to see the difference between "concerning them" and "towards them." It seems to me that the whole of the remarks quoted point to an indecisive attitude towards the animal kingdom and a suspicion of attempts to "serve God and Mammon."

I could wax wrathful indeed on the arbitrary assertions made and do question his authority to make them, but will try to take no more than necessary of your time and patience, Sir. However, I must take exception to the remark concerning false sentimentality as applied to those who love animals. I know that there are many thousands of others, who, like myself, have sufficient love in their hearts to be kind to animals and still be kind also to humans in addition to the quoted duty to one's neighbours. M. ROPER (Auckland).

NEWS BROADCASTS

Sir,—"Too Much BBC's" letter (May 11) draws attention to a feature which is sadly in need of reconsideration—the BBC news broadcasts. These broadcasts

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

were of intense interest during the war years, but now are almost completely lacking in interest to the average New Zealander. While many listeners completely ignore them, others find them a source of great irritation because they merely repeat in another wording what has already appeared in the daily papers, and because of the method of presentation—the headlines, the actual news, and a repetition of the headlines.

The value of a continuation of the news broadcasts should have been weighed up at the conclusion of the war, but as is the case with some serials, they are continued and continued until people hate the very name of them, and on announcement of the title switch off their sets.

The time taken up with the broadcasts, and wasted, could be much better employed in an extension of the gardening notes and advice, which are of general interest and of very real value to at least one person in every household throughout the country.

ANOTHER WANGANUI-ITE
(Wanganui).

NAMES OF PLAYERS

Sir,—I was most surprised after listening to Emlyn Williams's play *The Corn is Green*, that no detailed cast of the players was given over the radio. Upon enquiry to 2YC I am told that casts are never given of plays broadcast here. Why not? It seems a gross error on the part of the NZBS that they neither publish in *The Listener* nor announce after the play those taking part and their respective roles.

There must be many listeners like myself who greatly enjoy hearing these plays and who are naturally interested in the artists taking part. In any case, it is only fair to the players themselves that their names be credited.

KAY BURTON (Wellington).
(The players in major NZBS productions are to be named in future.—Ed.)

HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES

Sir,—In the review of Runciman's *History of the Crusades*, by W. B. Sutch, there appear some errors and perversities. The reviewer evidently thinks that the Great Schism, out of which arose the Greek Orthodox Church, occurred before 717 A.D., instead of some hundreds of years later. Moslem rule is said to have been lenient and pleasant to Christians in Jerusalem in the 11th Century (Shades of St. Bernard and Peter the Hermit!). The statement follows that the period 11th to 14th Century was to see a conflict between Western barbarism and the civilised East and the suggestion is made that this occurred (inter alia) because younger sons of French and Norman princes wanted Christian Byzantine land (Shades of St. Louis and Joinville, of Godfrey, of Raymond, and of Richard!). In any case, this is like saying that Serbia started World War I. because she wanted part of the land in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The "Societies of Europe" are said to have been in this period "poor and

primitive." I suppose "societies" of Europe means the nation of England, where Gloucester cathedral was in building and Chaucer writing; France where St. Thomas Aquinas was working and where Chartres windows were being made, Italy of Giotto and Dante. We are then told that there was no authoritative work in English on the Crusades until Runciman. Perhaps no complete account, but Joinville and Villehardouin have been translated into English for over a hundred years and Hilaire Belloc wrote a useful if short account.

Nor is it possible to gather from this article whether these statements and opinions are the reviewer's or whether he attributes them to Mr. Runciman.

EUROPEAN (Wellington).

(Our reviewer replies as follows: "My statement was that the First Crusade (in the 11th Century) was to create an irreparable schism between the Greek and Latin churches." I was referring to something more fundamental than the insertion of the word *filioque* in the Creed. The doctrinal differences on the nature of the Holy Ghost between the Latin Church and the Orthodox Eastern Church—also called Greek Church—began with Pope Leo I. in the 5th Century. In 1054 papal legates (without authority) excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople, but several attempts to bring the rival creeds together were made, notably those at Lyons in 1274 and Florence in 1439. The formal unity between the two branches was ended in 1472 when the patriarch of Constantinople repudiated the Florentine union.

"What is in the review is a summary of the work of scholarly historians who, over the last century, have stripped away a good deal of the exaggeration and legend from the crusades. For example, 11th Century heroes invoked by your correspondent—Peter, Godfrey and Raymond—were guilty of infamous actions. (I can give details if your correspondent wants them.)

"Yes, in the Dark Ages before the Renaissance, Europe was as poor and primitive as its church architecture was magnificent. (Even as late as Chaucer, who died in 1400, the Church owned one-third of the wealth of England.) In the 11th Century and taking one Eastern example only, Constantinople was ten times the size of any city of the West, its power was based on communities of free peasants (not serfs as in the West), and if art and architecture are the measure of civilisation, it was high above Western Europe.

"As for the authorities on the crusades, Belloc is, of course, not one. And Villehardouin's work is an official apology for the diversion in 1204 of the Fourth Crusade from an attack on Egypt to an attack on Christian Constantinople, so that, *inter alia*, the Christian Venetians could divide up the Christian East."—Ed.)

OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER

Sir,—I did not intend to say, and I don't think I did say, that the Bible had helped to stand my generation on its head. For that book I am almost as grateful as "A.H.R." himself.

OLIVER DUFF (Christchurch).

THE NEW EDUCATION

Sir,—I listened with interest to the series of talks by L. V. Bryant from 1YC in defence of the "new education." I am now awaiting with equal interest the presentation of the other side of what must be one of the most controversial topics of the day.

Mr. Bryant spoke persuasively, but it was noticeable that he frequently depended on assertion rather than argument to prove his case. He assumed, for example, that those who criticised the new education did so because they objected to any change in the system they remembered. In many cases that

may be correct, but Mr. Bryant must know that the real criticism has a much sounder basis than mere conservatism. Teachers, as well as parents and others, have grave misgivings about the present system.

Young people should be judged, as Mr. Bryant said, not by their conduct in the classroom, but by their conduct when away from supervision. That is precisely where the new education fails—it does not inculcate the self-discipline which is so essential in adult life. How can children learn about life when they are sheltered from life's most important lessons?

The chief aims of any system of education should surely be: (a) To give children the basic training which will enable them to continue their own education after leaving school; (b) to foster their ability to think clearly; (c) to awaken their interest in cultural subjects. Our present system has drifted too far from fundamentals, and will not acknowledge the fact that there can be no really satisfactory substitute for hard work. GRADUATE (Auckland).

NEW ZEALAND FILMED

Sir,—I was interested to read the criticism of "P.J.W." when reviewing the film *New Zealand—A World Power*. Not having seen the film yet myself, I am in no position to give an opinion, but I thought readers might be interested to hear how the film has been received in one part of the world at least. Writing from Port Elizabeth, South Africa, my sister says: "Last night. . . I saw a very good film about New Zealand called *New Zealand, a World Power*. I felt very proud to be a New Zealander, especially at the end when the audience clapped. When the man who gave the commentary said 'New Zealanders are good rugby players,' somebody behind me remarked, 'But not as good as we are!'" I hope this film is received as well in other parts of the world as it appears to have been in South Africa.

KOWHAI (Wellington).

PIPE BAND CONTEST

Sir,—I should very much like to endorse the remarks made by M. L. White, and sympathise with "Bandsmen on the Outer," although the latter had a far better hearing than we who were most interested in the Dominion Pipe Band Contest. I am a Pipe Major of a non-competing band, but I had to cancel my bookings for Christchurch owing to admission into hospital, and I suppose I was one of many who were disappointed in the lack of broadcasts. I was even more disappointed when I realised how much time on the air was given to the Brass Band Contest. I fully appreciate the explanations made by the NZBS, but would like to make a special plea for better arrangements to be made at all future Dominion Pipe Band Contests, both by the contest committees and the NZBS.

DISAPPOINTED (Otaki).