

WELLINGTON POETS

Sir,—H. D. Clyde's letter on the above topic which sought, in fairness, some attention for the poet Ruth Gilbert, trod, I think, a little unfairly upon others concerned to achieve its purpose. First, Mr. Vogt gave two talks on the Wellington poets, and Ruth Gilbert was mentioned in the second of these.

I am sure that Mr. Vogt would not have liked to give the impression that in talking about the capital's poets he wished to exclude any worthy of mention. However, his main attention was given to a group of poets who have been active on behalf of poetry in Wellington during the past year.

These people have endeavoured to take poetry to the public by sponsoring readings, giving addresses to interested groups, etc., and have been responsible for a general resurgence of interest in poetry which Mr. Vogt chose to see as "a renaissance." This activity, and "the renaissance," were the real subjects of Mr. Vogt's address, and Ruth Gilbert, as she has not been part of such a movement here, warranted small part in the discussion. No reflection upon her poetic merit is or was intended, and I would agree that her works are superior to many of the other names mentioned on the programme.

However, H. D. Clyde, to prove his case, then sorts out the various qualifications of the "unnamed rest" with small regard to the facts. About half the poets mentioned are members of P.E.N. Many of them have published at least one book of verse. Half, again, have appeared also in the periodicals mentioned; and some in important overseas journals. If H. D. Clyde does not know these things, then it is surely time that some such programme as that given by Mr. Vogt drew attention to the activities of our poets.

If Mr. Vogt gave the impression that these poets used as some sort of mystical core or home of the heart the University and Training College, and wrote as a group, then it is an impression I hasten to correct. The people dealt with in detail have been writing for years, and owe their strength to their individuality. There is no suggestion of group writing. It is simply that a number of poets have found themselves living in one place, working in one place and studying in one place, and have come together for the purpose of introducing their works en masse to the one public.

LOUIS JOHNSON (Wellington).

PLAYING AND LEARNING

Sir,—I was interested in the article "Playing and Learning" (*Listener*, November 16). I do not want to enter into a discussion on the new and old ways of education as I am trying hard to see where the new education is leading our children and I try to keep an open mind, but I have certain ideas of what my children should know and a certain standard they should measure up to in education. Perhaps what I do will help Mrs. Wynne and other mothers. Each night I encourage the children to chat over the lessons they have had at school that day. This comes quite easily as I tell them what I have done and their father has always chatted to them of his doings. Any new work they put down in an old exercise book. I find out just how they have been taught to do each type of sum, etc. Each evening we go over some of the sums, tables, rules, etc., in the book. If they have had a nature lesson or a social studies one we look up

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the subject in our encyclopedias. Any subject they are weak in I give them a few minutes of each night, but keep to the ways they have been taught at school to do it.

At school they have more silent reading than reading aloud. But I can see many faults in so much silent reading, and my children read aloud for a short while each evening. When a child reading aloud comes to a word he doesn't know either compare it to a similar word he knows or break it into syllables for him so that he will learn to do the same for all difficult words he comes to. Otherwise in silent reading they will just skip.

In regard to Jean in the article using her fingers for her sums, I think the use of counters for so long in the Primers is making the children brain-lazy. I find this shows up in our youngest who is being taught under modern ways, while the older ones in the family were taught by teachers whose methods were more old fashioned. If Jean were my child I would give her about five minutes each evening of quick sums, starting with very simple ones, forbid the use of her fingers, and time her with the idea of improving in quickness. She would soon catch on to the idea and enjoy it. I find that our youngest does not face up to things and am constantly on the watch to correct this in his character. I truly think that it is a product of modern education. I have perhaps more to do than the average mother, but because I sincerely believe I am helping my children in giving them my time each evening I arrange my work to leave that time free. But it's a grand time to also do plain knitting or handmending. After all, they are my children and if I think schools are leaving out something in their education I must supply it.

A MOTHER (Makarau).

Sir,—I was interested in your article describing a parent's puzzles while her daughter is being educated. I wonder if any of your readers who are psychologists will be interested in these suggestions.

(1) Counting on fingers is quite all right at first, and often better than parrot-wise repetitions, which are mere language habits. But a normal child should learn to short-cut after a time, to leave out the physical checking. To encourage this, I should suggest plenty of work with real or artificial money (or counters), giving change, shopping for mother, choosing between alternatives (pears at one and two or half a pound of dried apricots and omit the spring onions). Not doing this as a sum, but actually shopping.

(2) Make up required sums with counters (have some domino style, some with ciphers. You can easily make them with cardboard). For example, give me enough counters of threes, fours, etc., to make up 43 or 79835. If the child thinks this childish, get her to do it at speed, or in competition with someone else. This gets her used to working with symbols and the dominoes help her to check

her work in another way from finger counting, paving the way to dropping both habits.

(3) If in doubt about tables, let the child go back to the combination she knows (say, five sevens), and work by addition up to, say, eight sevens which she has forgotten.

Does she find she can get as much story as she wants from the radio without bothering to read? Has she any sight trouble? Do you read to her to encourage her in book curiosity? Some read less easily and prefer maths or science or something practicable. Try "missing word" and messages. For "missing word," read something she likes to her and omit key words, words she will not too easily guess. She will read these more readily than single words. Leave written messages for her when there is occasion, encourage a friend or relative to write to her. A.M.G. (Dunedin).

Sir,—It seems to me that there were two indisputable points which were insufficiently dealt with by the teacher. One is that a good education (in the usually accepted meaning of the words) confers upon the child a confidence and dignity for which it is difficult to find a substitute, and such an education cannot be acquired save by study and fairly long hours of learning. The other point is that a child needs the security which a regular routine, moderate discipline and the leadership of a good teacher give, and the habits they learn therefrom of self-control, concentration, good manners, become natural.

Every child loves to be encouraged, drawn out, made to feel he can do things, and if in this receptive state he is taught his lessons, the knowledge is not dully acquired and readily lost. So much school play, as described in the article, while it fulfils these yearnings, does not satisfy the desire to learn nor provide a goal to work for so that in many cases (and I see it in my own children) a vague restlessness, lack of incentive and interest, and "I know where I'm going" attitude supervene after the primers and remain on through childhood. I could liken too early attempts at self-expression to the frustration a young baby feels when he has struggled to free his hands from the comfortable restriction of the shawl and then doesn't know what to do with them.

Having experienced the difficulties encountered by Mrs. Wynne, I would ask teachers to give a little more guidance to the children's attempts at self-expression. It does let them feel they are improving, and that the teacher is really interested. P.B. (Tawa Flat).

D'YE KEN GRAHAM GREENE?

Sir,—May I thank the correspondents who so kindly came to my assistance? I do not understand "D.E.H.'s" paragraph, but "J.C.R." and "Kind Uncle" show a sincere desire to be helpful, and I am very grateful indeed to them. I am glad to know of two books which it is quite safe to give to my little nephew, and I shall certainly buy him both *The*

Little Fire Engine and *The Little Train* for Christmas. "J.C.R." appears to think the same author has written more children's books, and suggests I should ask at the right bookshop counter next time; but as our bookshop has only one counter and they are not very helpful I wonder if he (or she) could advise me?

"Kind Uncle's" letter is so clearly and simply put that there can be, as he says, no danger of any further misunderstanding.

All the same, I really don't see how anyone could be expected to know that Graham Greene was really Dorothy Craigie. I should never have thought *Brighton Rock* was written by a woman. PUZZLED AUNT (Auckland).

SPRING COMING IN

Sir,—It is with regret that to a certain extent, I agree with D.E.H. (Wellington). Latterly some of the articles, stories and drawings in *The Listener* have been sordid, sadistic and ugly. There is enough ugliness in real life without anyone being forced to see it on paper too. Or am I hopelessly old-fashioned? Of course, I know that the same complaint can be made of some other papers, and books, films and items on the air. I regret it in *The Listener*.

ASTRA (Tauranga).

DECLINING FESTIVAL

Sir,—Many thanks to "New Zealand Scot" for the correction. Henceforth we read hog money as hogmanay. In cases like these *The Folk* are always right, even though it is difficult at times to know which folk.

B. SUTTON-SMITH (Wellington).

"OLD JACK"

Sir,—I was interested to see in your article "Coasting Around New Zealand" mention of the ship Old Jack. The Old Jack is at present being rebuilt in Havelock South by that well-known amateur yachtsman and builder Mr. Joseph Palmer. "NAUTICUS" (Nelson).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

R.E.B.E. (Oamaru).—Many thanks. Would have liked to use it but the correspondence is closed.

J. W. Dean (Otorohanga).—Letters should be related to broadcasting or to topics discussed lately in *The Listener*.

Agnes Merton (Christchurch).—Please send dates of issues and the pages on which the words were used.

A. M. Barr (Auckland).—Sorry, the correspondence had been closed before your letter arrived.

"Caruso Fan" (Paeroa), R. A. Craig (Mission Bay), R.H.L. (Wellington), and "The Outraged Opera Lover" (Auckland).—Points have been made by other correspondents.

J. Mears (Auckland).—The announcement was unnecessary and has not been repeated; but all request sessions are supervised, as their type requires, and children's request sessions are no exception.

"Annoyed" (Oamaru).—The hours during which Parliamentary proceedings are broadcast are fixed by the Government. If no direction is received to continue a broadcast beyond the time fixed, the broadcast must be terminated in accordance with the standing rule.

"Raumati South."—When Mr. Hoyle's talks were broadcast in the United Kingdom they were followed by broadcast replies; but these latter were not recorded for sending to New Zealand. Hence the reply arranged here. The NZBS endeavours always to present both sides of a question on which opposing views are strongly held—whatever the nature of the question. A script "containing views contrary to those of the religious organisations of this country" would not be rejected on that score alone—but neither would it be accepted on that score alone. If it were accepted, a balance talk would be sought from the other side. More often, the Service brings persons of differing views to one microphone, in a discussion.

THE CHRISTMAS "LISTENER"

TO overcome the difficulties of printing and distributing "The Listener" over Christmas and the New Year, and to make sure that all subscribers will have, in good time, programmes for the full holiday period, next issue will be expanded to include programmes for the two weeks December 24-30 and December 31-January 6. This means that there will be no issue of December 28. Normal publication will be resumed with the issue of January 4.