

PURPOSES OF EDUCATION

Sir,—H. C. Dent's talk summarised in *The Listener* (January 18) brings into focus a number of interesting educational questions, and perhaps would have raised more but for the natural reticence and courtesy of an English visitor. In some ways it is a pity some of these things cannot be openly discussed more fully in print. On the other hand, a lot of talk about some of the really important questions of our day does little good.

What use is it, for instance, to raise the question of professional status as between secondary and primary school teachers? It may be illogical that such a distinction should exist, but where there is a real vocation the humble pupil teacher will care as little about it as the porter of a Trappist monastery that he is not the Father Abbot.

Of more importance, perhaps, is the occasional airing of the real purposes of education; namely, that it does not matter particularly if there is a lack of training in the technique of material advancement or scientific research and that the training does not enable the pupil to "get on" or to make money or to grow wool or what have you. Bound up in this is the question of philosophy and particularly Christian philosophy. Criticism of lack of time may be met by saying that academic study is always incomplete at whatever age or stage you look at it. It has been well said that there is little evidence since Charlemagne that the State cherishes scholarship for its own sake. Universal literacy is a utilitarian aim and is not directed to breadth of mind or wisdom or even the mastery of the elements of thought and language. Consider Joyce Cary's literate Africans. If this needs any further proof, laugh for a moment at the spectacle of Latin studies in our secondary schools today. It is indeed very true, as stated in New Zealand in the recent speech from the Throne, that our New Zealand schools are Christian, but whether this is of purpose or by historical accident is another matter. I doubt that there is any common purpose behind education in New Zealand today, decent men though the teachers are. Our ancestors endowed schools to teach Christian philosophy, to inculcate the principles underlying a code of conduct. If you gave £1,000,000 to endow the Waipapaitree District High School what would be your object in so endowing it? But the founder of, say, Winchester understood Latin sufficiently to know that education comes from a verb meaning to lead along (a path), even if its a garden path; and has nothing to do with the strange modern notion that it means educating something or other out of the pupil; like releasing a spring for a jack-in-the-box.

If we don't look out all we'll get will be jacks-in-the-box or, alternatively (as Disraeli forecast), clever villains.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
(Wellington).

BEFORE OR AFTER

Sir,—Should the titles of records be announced before or after they are played from the radio stations?

During the day most radios are just a means of providing background music for household duties; similarly, they are companions for car drivers, travellers, and so on. Every so often a record is heard that makes one pause to listen: a catchy melody; a singer perhaps (wonder who he is?), or some tantalising air the title of which completely eludes one—Now, I know that tune as well as anything, but just can't think of its name! Will the announcer say what it was?

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

Not he! He proceeds to give the name of the next record.

The above happens over and over again. Admittedly some stations do announce after the record some of the time, but could not they all do it all the time? Some listeners may argue that they prefer to know what they are going to hear rather than what they have heard. Well, if necessary, let the titles be given before, but most certainly afterwards as well.

MAL A PROPOS (Eltham).

"OVER MY DEAD BODY"

Sir,—After hearing the publicised discussion between Ngaio Marsh and Patricia Guest I must express my keen disappointment. To hear a woman of Miss Marsh's brilliance being hampered by fumbling and inadequate questions was quite agonising. Mrs. Guest surely reached a pinnacle of absurdity in asking Miss Marsh if she approved of detective fiction. Could the Broadcasting Service be induced to allow Miss Marsh uninterrupted time in which to give listeners a chance to enjoy her wit and personality?

P.F. (Wellington).

LANZA AND CARUSO

Sir,—It is obvious after listening to Lanza's operatic recordings that he does not understand what is required of him. Such arias as the popular "Che Gelida Manina" are sung in an all-out style from start to finish, and that hungry, devouring expression never varies. I agree that these faults arise from inexperience, but it is ridiculous to suggest he excels Caruso as he is now.

Where does W. S. Flint get the idea that at the age of 30 Caruso had a "weak, but pleasant, voice?" One of the chief qualities for which his voice was famous was its exceptional power, and the critics of those days agreed that the period of his greatest vocal brilliance was 1904-1907, or from the age of 31 to 34. It was when he reached middle age that he was considered past his best, as his voice had darkened through over-use. As for Caruso's "years of study," all the musical training he ever had was for one year when he was 18, listening to a famous singing teacher. Virgine, teaching a class of pupils. Virgine would not include Caruso in his class, for although he said the boy had the most powerful voice he had heard, he considered it unmusical. That was the extent of his "years of study." Incidentally, another young man whom Virgine predicted would be the world's greatest tenor became, instead, Caruso's assistant valet in later years, so with all due respect to Dr. Serge Koussevitzky's opinion of Lanza, it would seem that even great men can be mistaken.

It is a great pity Enrico Caruso did not live long enough to make electric recordings, then we today could get a much better idea of the power and quality of his voice. I wonder how many people in New Zealand ever witnessed any of his performances.

Lanza is a good singer with a good voice, but I doubt if he will ever reach the standard of Gigli, Caruso, Martinelli, etc.

RIGOLETTO (Katikati).

Sir,—In the present correspondence on Lanza and Caruso I find there is a letter signed "Vesti la Giubba," which makes two unfounded assertions. First, your correspondent claims that Caruso at Lanza's age cracked on the high B flat. Whether he meant that Caruso cracked continually or just on one occasion we do not know. Presumably he meant the former.

Has your correspondent heard any of the wonderful recordings made by Caruso between 1902 and 1906, when his voice was considered to be at the height of its lyrical beauty? In 1902 Caruso was 29 and these recordings are literally studded with high B flats. We also find B naturals and high C's.

I suggest that your correspondent makes a point of hearing recordings such as "Cielo e Mar" and "Spirito Gentil," made during the above period. They will prove my point, and incidentally will prove the remarks of W. S. Flint to be wrong.

"Vesti la Giubba" then claims that Lanza and Bjorling are the only tenors in the world who can sing the high D flat. Either your correspondent has made an intensive study which would almost involve a personal interview with all the world's tenors, or he is only guessing. I presume that Bjorling is included because of his recording of "Cujus Animam." That, of course, proves that Bjorling can sing the note in question, but it would take a lot to prove that nobody else in the world can do it.

If the singing of extreme high notes is the main qualification for a tenor, why not introduce Martini into the discussion? He is the only tenor to sing "I Puritani" in the original key since the legendary Rubini. He can soar to the dizzy height of F in alt.

QUESTO O QUELLA (Auckland).

"SUNDOWNER" AND ISRAEL

Sir,—I am interested in this discussion about the story of Cain and Abel, which puzzled me from childhood. In the light of present-day thought it would seem to put the emphasis in the wrong place. Now, as a teacher of Bible lessons in school, I have had to find a way of using the story to the advantage of my small hearers. As I take it, my task is

to acquaint them with the contents of the Bible, but unless I can link this to their own experience in some way, I might as well tell them stories from Hans Andersen or Aesop.

Reading the story of Cain and Abel with this in view, I find that Cain was indignant and resentful at the outcome of their sacrifice. And God said, "Why art thou wroth? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou does not well, sin lieth at the door." It was not the nature of the sacrifice that was in question, but something which went before, and which both God and Cain knew. This reminds me of the injunction of the Lord Jesus, "If thou have anything against thy brother, go and be reconciled with him, and then come and lay thine offering on the altar." Cain's actions after his talk with God furnish me with my "link" for the children, and I tell them that he had a violent temper, which he allowed to get the better of him, so far in this case that he slew his brother—a climax no doubt often repeated in the lives of people of undisciplined violent temper, an unpremeditated blow, harder than it was judged to be. So, I use this as a text for a little talk on self-control and a right attitude towards others—"Am I my brother's keeper?" The point is, as I see it, not in the nature of the gift, but in the heart of the giver.

H. HARRIS.

Sir,—There appear to be far too many doubts in Mr. Murray's mind to be cleared up by Mr. Eyres's concise and accurate account of God's revealing Himself and His requirements at the hands of those He chose to lead. The second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles is a pronounced sequel to God's dealing with a people who apprehend His majesty in controlling a world from outside our sphere. This reveals a power beyond our limited physical comprehension. We pride ourselves because of the self-acting power we possess, but when we ask the reason, does it not also appear we are warned against a blasphemous attitude, when the enlightening truth is ignored?

STUDENT (Hamilton).

(Mr. J. Malton Murray may, if he wishes, reply briefly to his critics, after which this correspondence will be closed.—Ed.)

OLD JACK

Sir,—For the benefit of "Old Wellingtonian," the Old Jack mentioned in "Coasting Around New Zealand" is the vessel from which he bought the apples. At that time she was owned by Guards of Port Underwood. She is still afloat today.

T. FLOOD (Pieton).

"THE DESERT FOX"

Sir,—I am glad to see "Jno" rates the Rommel film *The Desert Fox* as only "fair." I, too, found it in many respects disappointing. I have nothing against James Mason as a capable actor; but I think that owing to Hollywood's slavish adherence to the "star" system he was mis-cast in the part of Rommel. Mason's facial characteristics and general appearance bear absolutely no resemblance to Rommel's, and I am sure if an unknown actor with some real likeness to the tough German had played the part the film could have been rated "fine." The actor who "stole" the show was Leo J. Carroll as von Rundstedt. I, too, expected to see some exciting tank battles and, perhaps, some glimpses of Bardia and Sidi Barrani, but had to be content with some cuts from *Desert Victory*. LEE GREEN (Onehunga).

WEST INDIES CRICKET

SPECIAL arrangements for radio coverage of the cricket matches to be played by the West Indies team at present in New Zealand have been announced. The match between the visitors and Otago on February 2, 4 and 5, will be carried by 4YA continuously from 11.30 a.m. until 6 p.m., 4YC beginning at 11.30 a.m. with the programme formerly scheduled to be heard from 4YA. Station 2YA will rebroadcast the cricket commentary from 4YA during the day between 11.30 and 12.0 noon, 12.33-1.0, 1.40-2.0, 3.20-3.40, 4.30-5.0, and 5.30-6.0. Progress reports from the West Indies-Otago match will be broadcast at intervals during the day from all YA and YZ stations. On February 8 will begin the first Test match between the West Indies and New Zealand, to be played at Christchurch on February 8, 9, 11 and 12. This game will be broadcast continuously during the day from 11.30 a.m. to 6.0 p.m. by 3YA, 3YC taking over the normal programme for that station, including the Canterbury Park Trots on February 9. Progress reports and rebroadcasts of the commentary from 3YA will be heard from all other YA stations at the same times as given for 2YA on the Otago match.