

## NEW ZEALAND TALENT

Sir,—When the present Government came to power, I seem to remember the Minister concerned promising much brighter programmes and, I think, more use of local artists. If one looks through the published programmes in *The Listener* today, items by local artists appear to be confined to vocal and instrumental music, and items of a lighter type are conspicuous by their absence. It is true that we are supplied with recorded BBC shows, such as *Take It From Here*, *Variety Bandbox*, etc., but even then we often get them twice, first on the Commercial and then on the National programmes. Few people would wish to belittle the undoubted wit and humour of these programmes, but many of the gags are topical and refer to happenings that occurred over twelve months previously, some of which have never been heard of in New Zealand.

Several attempts have been made to produce local shows. Were these attempts entirely abortive? Did they meet with such a hostile reception that the service has decided not to continue with them? The last two shows that one calls to mind are *It's In the Air*, and *Wizards of Quiz*. The first one was not purely local, as the scripts were imported, but we did have local talent, who gave of their best and carried on the tradition that had been started earlier by *Wizards of Quiz*. This latter show was entirely New Zealand made. It pleased me, but I realise that it may not have pleased everybody; nevertheless, it attempted to portray New Zealand life, and I am sure that thousands must have chuckled at the absurd goings-on at Nokotomato. We also used to hear many local turns from 2YA on Saturday nights several years ago, but these shows also seem to have joined the rest in the limbo of the lost.

Why cannot import restrictions be applied to the overseas shows, so that the locally-produced article can have a chance?

## WELL-MADE, NEW ZEALAND (Wellington).

(It is very far from true that programmes by New Zealand artists are confined to vocal and instrumental music. Nor is it true that light programmes by New Zealand artists are "conspicuous by their absence." But our correspondent perhaps refers only or mainly to variety, not the easiest field to cultivate successfully. The Broadcasting Service has by no means decided not to continue such productions. In addition to those he mentions, the Christmas variety show, *You're Welcome*, was produced last year at Auckland, has been heard from all ZB stations and 2ZA, and is still to be presented at three more stations.—Ed.)

## THE WRITER AS OUTCAST

Sir,—Holding Professor Gordon in some regard, I hesitate to challenge his statements publicly, but do so knowing he would prefer argument to silent disapproval. Agreeing with some of the Professor's points, I yet think that they are so generalised that nobody could prove them specifically. It is no surprise therefore to find him walking in such a circle that he eventually treads on his own heels.

First, he admits Baxter and Sargeson as two of our best writers. Surely, then, they could not have achieved distinction in the field other than by "writing about what they know"—the Professor's prescription for good writing. All that the Professor is left with is a few complaints that our writers are not tackling what they don't know! By trying to make a number of loopholes in the argument, the Professor has deprived himself of the grounds on which his case rests. The case surely could only stand if Baxter and Sargeson were

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failures because of their lack of social attitude.

Scorning the "myth of childhood" which obsesses our novelists, he quotes three: *When the Wind Blows*, *The Huntsman in his Career*, and *Roads from Home*. Yet none of these books is exclusively childhood stories. Rather do they explore New Zealand family life, the very thing which the Professor implies is lacking.

This misunderstanding is not surprising since the Professor says that a writer must write about something, whereas the people in question have only "individual vision." Yet the Professor seems to have dismissed most of the writing of these men in favour of his own "individual vision" or interpretation of a sentence from each, upon which his whole case rests. They can only have written about "nothing" (which is implied) because (a) the Professor has not read them, or (b) remembers only the sentences he quotes out of the context of all their writings.

Further, if a man is admitted as being either a writer of distinction, or as possessing an "individual vision," my guess is that his reasons for wilfully choosing the life of a social outcast will be worth heeding.

The English experts have every right to be concerned with the state of our literature; but our writers, even more, have the right to demand that their works should not be publicly misinterpreted by the experts.

LOUIS JOHNSON (Wellington).

## LIFE AFTER DEATH

Sir,—I wish I could impress upon those correspondents who declare that a future life is a scientific fact that they are not doing God's will but opposing it. It is perfectly obvious that if the Bible could be proved true, then faith would not be required. In such an event the Bible's message would be accepted in the same manner as we now accept the theory that a machine heavier than air can fly. Nobody nowadays would say "It is my faith that a machine heavier than air can fly." Consequently, if the Bible could be proved true, it would be ridiculous to say, "It is my faith that the Bible is true." Proving the truth of the Bible makes faith unnecessary. If faith is unnecessary, the Bible is useless.

The many astounding feats performed by spiritualists, faith healers and hypnotists do not prove the Bible to be true; but they do prove, in many cases at least, the power of faith. This power is the greatest force in the world.

Your correspondent Roy Escott says, "A spiritualist's faith is built on sure knowledge." He misunderstands what faith is. For his information, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Some of your correspondents have a peculiar faith which could be described as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things seen."

D. MARTIN (Palmerston North).

Sir,—Your correspondent, Gertrude Brooks, has rightly drawn attention to the remarks made about mediumship and Spiritualist services, by Professor Arnold Wall in a recent broadcast. I have always understood that the NZBS did not permit anyone to make statements that might violate other people's feelings and religious beliefs.

In rebuttal to the charges of "remarkably low mentality" and "unculture,"

might I be permitted to say that over a long period in close association with spiritualism this has not been my experience. In a general sense spiritualism appeals easily to ordinary people as in like manner did early Christianity. These are unfettered by intellectual inhibitions. There are always, in all movements and groups, more simple-minded Peters than intellectual Pauls. But simple-mindedness does not in any way mean weak-mindedness. Neither does a lack of intellectuality necessarily connote a lack of true spiritual culture.

The hypotheses of the intellectualist, the agnostic, and the religiously prejudiced, where these are made to account for psychic or physical manifestations, are each more fantastic and unbelievable than the simple truth, that they are what they themselves claim to be, survivors of bodily death. However, as with the redoubtable Professor Joad, it takes more than one Damascus Road experience to overthrow the most deeply entrenched antagonists. However, again, it is from these Paul-like converts that much strength is drawn by propagandists for human survival of bodily death. Men and women of note, drawn as they are from every field of science, literature, art, religion, politics, medicine, industry, war, etc., have been pleased to give their comments and admissions in support of personal conviction of the truth of human survival. With these as with all who are lesser lights, it is not the man who has to be overthrown so often as it is his sense of intellectual superiority. The age-old cry, "Why persecutest thou Me?" might well be repeated today. It was a cry to an intelligent man to give a reason for an otherwise unintelligent series of actions.

It has to be admitted that there is a deplorable practice of psychometry and clairvoyant fortune-telling parasitical in the Spiritualist movement, and that a number of one-man churches adopt these means to attract sufficient money to sustain a perhaps otherwise useless spiritual identity. But those churches united throughout New Zealand under the Act of the Spiritualist Church of New Zealand, from the earliest date, incorporated bylaws prohibiting such degrading demonstrations as are indeed defamatory of the name of mediumship in its true function, that of uniting loved ones parted by death, of proving thereby survival of bodily death, and of imparting spiritual communications received from enlightened minds in the world beyond death. Over and above this, mediumship is the channel through which healing power flows, curing the sick of physical and mental ailments in a way that has not been exceeded at any time. One might ask as did the man Jesus of old, "For what good work am I called in question?"

J. S. MANDER,  
President, Spiritualist Church of  
N.Z. (Christchurch).

Sir,—"Another Student" in your issue of March 7 asks me to whom have I proved human survival after death. St. Paul tells of those who can discern spirits. I have this spiritual gift. Not once, but many times have I given proof to people who have acknowledged the description to be correct. Your other correspondent, J. Malton Murray, seems to be dubious about a future life. All of us must eventually pass on. Each materialist, each one who denies God, must

pass through physical death. What of those who have turned from the light? What of those who have spurned the teachings which would have brought them spiritual emancipation? They pass into their own world. Doubt and self build a prison from which it is hard to extricate the victim. Let us send out our compassion to all who believe not in a future life. That life is a life of compensation, where we reap our harvest, for God is not mocked.

THE STUDENT (Wellington).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

## THE BANNED LIST

Sir,—I see that Cole Porter's lyrics for four of the songs out of the musical comedy *Kiss Me, Kate!* have been deemed too risqué for New Zealand listeners, and have been placed on the banned list by the Broadcasting Service. From what I know of Porter's work and from the fact that the show itself (plus the offending numbers) is popular both with critics and public in England—not to speak of America—I imagine that our finer susceptibilities would not suffer too acutely from contact with them. But since the censorship seems to think so, I fail to see how two current hits—"Come on a my house" and "If you've got the money, I've got the time"—have escaped its vigilant notice. Their implications do not deserve the description "risqué," admittedly. "Lewd" would be more in order.

E.B. (Herne Bay).

## KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Sir,—The *Listener's* announcement for Mr. Hart-Smith's review of Katherine Mansfield's letters is accompanied by her portrait—a miniaturist's interpretation of the 1913 photograph which Mr. Middleton Murry has allowed to be published, at least twice; in 1920 when she was thirty-one years old and in 1951, twenty-eight years after her death.

Katherine Mansfield's reactions in 1920 read: "Entreat you let no one have hideous old photograph published in *Sphere*, burn it—it's not me. It's a HORROR. If it's given to any one please get it back. Fool I was not to have burnt it. I am not that other woman. I am not this great girl. Now I must ask you to see that it is destroyed at once."

Are we faintly reminded of the question and answer in her unfinished story *Six Years After*?

"Can one do nothing for the dead? And for a long time the answer had been—Nothing!"

HELEN SHAW (Auckland).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

D. Clift (Auckland).—Sorry: no information available.

Enquirer (Auckland).—"Ouida" was not mentioned; only Marie Corelli.

Ailsa Pearson (Auckland).—He is an American. No photograph has yet been available.

G. E. Elderton (Otago).—You have been misinformed: reviews are paid for. Please send your full address.

Eager for More (Christchurch), Frank Brown (Takapuna) and Bessie Horn (Wairoa).—Many thanks. Will pass it on.

J. C. Scanlan (Otago).—The Service continues to be guided by the information and the recommendation of the Hydro-electricity Department.

Some More, Please (Christchurch).—Children's sessions at commercial stations are now designed for children of 9 or 10 upwards; programmes for younger children are still presented by YA and YZ stations.