

LETTERS from LISTENERS

(Continued from page 5)

GARDENING SUCCESSION

Sir,—The many regular listeners to the Garden Session from 3YA on Monday evenings must have felt a pang of regret when they realised that they heard the familiar voice of the "Garden Expert," T. D. Lennie, for the last time in that capacity on Monday, April 7, when he gave advice, based on his long experience, to his successor, John Glazebrook. Considerable interest must have been aroused by the article in *The Listener* of April 4, in which notable features in the careers of the two experts were mentioned, giving readers a conception of the unquestionably high qualifications of each in the particular field of horticulture. As a resident of Timaru, I was interested to hear Mr. Lennie say that he received more inquiries from people in this area than from other cities or towns in the Dominion, in most parts of which he had listeners and correspondents. In passing, I endorse his suggestion, made during his final broadcast, that the time of the regular session should be altered from 7.15 to 8.15 or 8.30 p.m., to meet the convenience of listeners, particularly during the summer months. The main purpose of my letter, however, is to convey to Mr. Lennie the grateful thanks and appreciation

of one of his numerous listeners for his most helpful, practical and valuable advice on all garden problems, towards the solution of which he has made a notable contribution in his own inimitable way. J. B. DOWLING (Timaru).

BRAIN SURGERY

Sir,—The talk from 3YA, April 6, was an interesting, convincing, if slightly grisly presentation of the marvel of modern brain surgery. Distressing and destructive obsessions are removed, the personality altered, and, maybe, lifelong confinement in a mental hospital avoided. Those doing these things are moved by the highest motives. But could there be another side? Charles Morgan in his book *Liberties of the Mind* thinks so. He became alarmed when an American scientist told him that the world can look forward to the production of "atomic milk" because cows take up too much room; that by atomic means you could "put out" a selected part of the brain, transforming a potential criminal into a good citizen; mental deficiency and hereditary faults could be corrected. Morgan thought: "If that can be done, what is to prevent the 'reconditioning' of children's brains so that we get a population of docile slaves accepting the

commands of unscrupulous rulers and devoid of the faculty of resistance?" The scientist had a fair retort when he said that "Any progress is open to abuse"; and that "To put a mind 'in' was a different story from neutralising a selected part of the brain."

Mr. Morgan may be prematurely and unduly alarmed, yet we must not forget that the potential benefits of the motor-car have crystallised into the devilish destruction of the tank; that the beneficial potentialities of the aeroplane have developed into supersonic rockets, guided missiles and the bomber with an atomic load that could extinguish all life on an entire continent; that the beneficial potentialities of the radio and literature are being used to enslave millions. It is once again the risk of discovery outrunning moral responsibility.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).

CHEWING THE CUD

Sir,—*"Sundowner's"* articles are always a great pleasure to read; but having long waited in vain for any reference in them to the above subject I feel impelled now to broach it myself.

Beyond what one gathers from brief holidays in the country, I know little of farming; but the spectacle of cows contentedly chewing the cud has always intrigued me—particularly when I began

to study the technique of bovine rumination.

After a while I discovered that this masticatory process—far from being merely fortuitous—follows a deliberate pattern: i.e., the number of times the cud is chewed before being finally swallowed remains almost constant in each individual animal. In a herd of Jersey cows which I watched closely over a considerable period the number of chews per cow averaged 39—none of them chewed fewer than 37 or more than 41 times.

It would be interesting, Sir, to learn from your farming readers, or from *"Sundowner"* himself, whether it be thought that this numerical consistency has any lactiferous significance—in other words, could one infer that the quality of milk is determined by the total of pre-deglutitionary chews?

We might also inquire whether the cow exercises free will in this connection or is automatically animated—i.e., does she choose how many chews, or does blind instinct operate?

Incidentally, some years ago I drew the attention of Lord Bledisloe to this matter; he replied that it was quite new to him and thought it well worth investigation.

In conclusion one might ask—as cows are allegedly influenced by music—whether the ugly modern idiom tends to produce curdiness and rancidity in milk?

L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).



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