

Sir,—As a member of the medical profession for more than 27 years, in all the different branches of practice, I protest most vehemently at the letter written by "No False Colours." This ignorant man, whoever he is, writes as though the ordinary family practitioner were some sort of professional pariah gathering patients by false pretences.

Though not in general practice myself at this stage of my career, I still hold the belief that the G.P. is the most important, as he is the hardest-worked member of the Faculty of Medicine, for his surgery is the clearing house of all grave diseases. But for his careful diagnoses, there would be very few patients to refer to consultants, whether they be M.D. or F.R.C.S.

According to Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, the first duty of a doctor is to prevent disease. To achieve this ideal a man must have, in addition to his knowledge and skill, the ability to teach his patients a way of living calculated to promote a healthy body and a sound mind. Strictly speaking, it is he who has the better right to be entitled "doctor," for does not this word mean a teacher, in elementary Latin?

No right-thinking people can look complacently on at the spectacle of a graduate of one or two years in hospital work launching out on the strength of a thesis which, if he has the time and money, he can present less than a year after qualification. The magic letters can go on his plate and his visiting card. Something more than theory, however, is required before these letters can mean anything. If it takes six years of medical study to turn out a doctor, it certainly takes 12 years more to make a specialist, for only after continuous independent practice covering all aspects from general and family practice to industrial medicine, with perhaps some cottage hospital work for minor surgery and midwifery, can any man who is honest about his profession launch out into the specialist class.

Perhaps "No False Colours" will state his views on the form of address to be used when dealing with or talking to the general practitioner. The title Mr. is now denied him, lest he be accused of pretending to specialist surgery.

VIA VERITAS VITA (Dunedin).

### CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL

Sir,—It would appear that after 21 years of nursing I am greatly mistaken in my opinion. I have no special pediatric training, but I have my psychiatric certificate, and I thought that I detected a note of hysteria in some of the remarks addressed to the doctor in the panel that was broadcast from 3YA.

One point: by "settled," I mean restful. This remark, "giving no further trouble to the nursing staff," conveys the idea that your correspondent has a grudge against nurses, perhaps thinks that they are a lazy clan. I can assure her that a great percentage of them enjoy duties in the children's wards.

I am aware of the fact that parents do give hypodermic injections to their children. I have also nursed young children admitted with their mothers (this was in 1951) to a private hospital in Christchurch. In some instances this proved an asset, with good co-operation between mothers and staff; but some mothers were so over-anxious that their presence was of doubtful value. Some mothers are not good for their own children—believe me! I am very interested in this subject, as it affects New Zealand nurses, and New Zealand hospitals; but I can sense that if any opposition

is put forward it is immediately downed by a list of things done at Great Ormond Street, or what Dr. So-and-So says. Surely New Zealand can deal with the situation.

J. C. RALPH-SMITH  
(Christchurch).

### CHARLES LAMB

Sir,—So, according to Mr. Anton Vogt, Charles Lamb was "a tiresome old buffoon"—chairman's remarks, *ZB Book Review*, May 24. Assuming Mr. Vogt reads poetry, he may recall that a New Zealander once wrote that certain people "oft measure giants by their narrow gauge." Anyhow, I suppose one doesn't have to be old to be tiresome.

ELIA (Wellington).

(This letter is mentioned in our leading article.—Ed.)

Sir,—I daresay Mr. Anton Vogt will say he did not chair the 42B review of May 24, but I thought I heard him acting as chairman and alluding to Charles Lamb as an "old buffoon." Evidently Wordsworth, Southey, Leigh Hunt, Coleridge, de Quincey, Hazlitt and Hood were sadly deceived in him. Saintsbury, too, that cool critic, Edmund Blunden, E. V. Lucas and J. E. Morpurgo of the Penguin Lamb are worthy of contempt.

SACRIFICE TO THE GRACES  
(Dunedin).

### FOREIGN MATTER

Sir,—I entirely agree with "Smooth Passage" in disliking the unnecessary introduction of foreign words into English; but surely it is recognised as good English practice to use foreign words for which there is not a native substitute. Fowler, who condemns the gallicising habit as strongly as anyone, also points to the justifiable use of agent provocateur, esprit de corps, cadre, "and a hundred other words that save circumlocution." I submit that *poète maudit* is a term of this kind. It is in recognised critical use, and I take it to stand for something like the idea of the poet-as-scapegoat, expiating the sins of society by accepting its "curse." There is no English term that gives this meaning—obviously the literal translation ("accursed poet") won't help. I further submit that the term properly applies to Mr. Baxter's work in *Poems Unpleasant* and certain other places. It may be, as "Smooth Passage" alleges, that the term was unfamiliar to some readers; thanks to our joint efforts, that is now changed and (to use another untranslatable foreign expression) they ken fine the noo.

M.K.J. (Auckland).

### THE BABY IN THE HOUSE

Sir,—In a recent *Listener* (May 15) "J.B.'s" letter contained the best summary of the ideals of motherhood I have yet seen.

Fashionable psychology now stresses the importance of early childhood, and rightly so; but I think few are convinced of the importance of the mother who is the whole environment of the child before birth and who creates most of it for some years afterwards. (It is, of course, beyond doubt that the other parent largely sets the emotional tone of a household and is present even in absence.)

The values of our civilisation do not allow that parenthood is the most important human function. Otherwise, why so often the absence of footpaths and

ramps? Why trams that have to be climbed into? Why a mile-long shopping area in a Wellington suburb without a toilet for toddlers? Why shops with entrance steps, swing doors and scanty passageways?

On the credit side, there are now bodies which aim at helping in the mental and physical training for childbirth. A normal birth is capable of being a natural birth in which a mother makes a happy start with her infant and subsequently nourishes it naturally. The Plunket Society uses the phrase "flexible regularity of all habits" and aims at being a guide to parents and not a law. "Self-demand" feeding usually means no more than picking the newborn babe up if he cries, feeding him if he is hungry, even if it is an hour early, and if he really wants to cry for exercise, allowing it. Within a month he makes himself a routine that approximates the Plunket one anyway.

It is a pity there is not more useful baby-lore passed down in a baby-conscious community to help form a basis for the emotional security of young mothers. Too many of us start with the idea of discipline foremost and not tenderness. Motherhood is the one job that cannot safely be scamped, although there should be some relief from the constant presence of a child, and generally is, in the form of neighbours and relatives or play centres.

I think success could only be claimed if a new baby in a family was warmly welcomed and then not too much pondered on.

PATRICIA S. FRY (Wellington).

### UNIVERSAL AUNT

Sir,—In a recent programme of *What's My Line?* one of the challengers was a Universal Aunt. Could you please give me some information on this occupation?

CURIOUS (Dunedin).

(As far as we can discover, a Universal Aunt is a woman who is willing to do any form of domestic duty, from baby-sitting to secretarial work. One of our new readers from England may be able to supply a more precise definition.—Ed.)

### THE SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE

Sir,—I apologise to Mr. Vogt.

IPSO FACTO (Hamilton).

### EXPLORING NEW ZEALAND

Sir,—If Mr. John Pascoe is right in maintaining that Brunner and party were at Farewell on March 26, 1846, then was the late Hon. P. J. O'Regan wrong when he wrote, "The two explorers (Brunner and Heaphy) started from Nelson, again under the guidance of Kehu, on March 17, 1846, intending to walk along the coast to Arahura. Having crossed to Golden Bay in a small vessel, they set out from Aorere on March 23 for West Whanganui?" And was A. J. Harrop wrong when he wrote, "Messrs. Heaphy and Brunner, two of the Company's surveyors, visited the West Coast in 1845 (should be 1846?) and travelled along it on foot from West Whanganui, near Cape Farewell, to the Grey River?" Would Mr. Pascoe divulge the source of his information, please?

The Maori name of the lake would be Rotoroa, despite the example of the Survey Department. If the name is to be Anglicised, why not call it Long Lake?

As to Brunner's view from the top of the Victoria Range, Mr. O'Regan commented as follows: "It would be difficult

to excel the accuracy with which Brunner has described the splendid panorama which lay round him as he stood on the highest summit of the Victoria Range. Nevertheless, there is one error. He never saw the plains of the eastern coast, for he could not, even from the eminence on which he stood, look over the Southern Alps."

CANTNEL (Gisborne).

### WIVES AND SHEEP

Sir,—Your correspondent "Wider Horizons" could not have chosen a better nom-de-plume to illustrate his own want. Like the man who talks of sheep, and the fisherman, he wants to bore thousands of *Listener* readers because he is obsessed with ideas gained by reading out-of-date Steele Rudd stories. He will find plenty of cases of "one track mentality" close at hand without going to the country. Dissatisfied wives and stories like the play he writes about have been favourite themes with writers for ages. Farming is a scientific business nowadays, and the farmer's wife is a very happy person with her Institute meetings, amateur theatricals, etc., in the remote backblocks. They meet at one another's houses if they have no hall near by.

The type of husband he mentions is extremely rare, but can be met with in cities. It is just one of the unfortunate things about human nature that some people even living in good circumstances are dissatisfied with life—note Hollywood with all its "Wide Horizons." If your correspondent would read the *Women's Notes* in any farm journal he would observe that a better state of things exists than that which he writes about. When a man states he wouldn't blame a wife for throwing a teapot at her husband he is exposing his own head, but farmers' wives are more likely to observe him with pity.

A highly-educated clergyman who loves the country said to me quite recently, "Living on concrete makes men hard." This does seem to be the reason why some men needlessly attack other people. The burial of an aged relative is regarded everywhere as a course of nature and life goes on as usual. In towns men may be seen going to golf or bowling as soon as the funeral is over.

BROAD MIND (Waimate).

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Baai! Baai! Black Sheep (Taihape).—Afraid it would not be possible at present.

Admirer (Waimate).—The point of view you express was fully considered but could not be decisive.

Merlin (Hawera).—No child's ear will be hurt or speech degraded by hearing the scale of vowels proper to sound Lowland Scots, or the trilled R, or any other of the characteristics of this traditional form of English speech.

G. D. M. Goodwin (Queen Charlotte Sound).—The census of adherents is accepted as a basic guide: but the rota is worked out, and departs from strict proportion by agreement among the representatives of the churches themselves, on the Central Religious Advisory Committee.

E. M. Trendle (Gleaside).—(1) Lengthened to "e," no; but if you mean the shorter sound—as if Sundy rhymed with the Bay of Fundy—then that is perfectly correct and it is the small boys who are in error. (2) The possibility of "a change once in a while" will be considered.

W. (Palmerston North).—(1) Close inquiry has not verified the statement that such announcement forms are too frequently repeated. In general, standard forms are preferred. (2) Time and call-sign are infrequently announced from 2YC: from 2YA, after 9 a.m., not often than many listeners expect and wish. (3) Thanks for the critical comments as well as for the compliments.