

THE HISS CASE

Sir.—As an inveterate reader of reviews, I found "Teacher's" review of the Hiss case most interesting—especially as two months' search has yielded me only one of four books connected with the trial. The suggestion of a bewildered jury overlooks one thing—the crux of the case was a simple matter of fact. Chambers produced secret documents stolen some 13 years before and typed on Hiss's typewriter. The defence admitted that. Their dates showed they had been typed after Hiss claimed he had last met Chambers. They were papers to which Hiss had access. Chambers claimed Hiss gave them to him. Treason cases differ from ordinary criminal cases in that apparent integrity is no guarantee of a man's innocence. It is the first essential of a successful spy that he should be *above suspicion*. In this case one man was obviously a monumental liar and, as in most detective stories, the little lies gave the truth away. The little lies were on matters of fact. How did Chambers get the documents? Had he known Hiss after Hiss claimed he last saw Chambers?

Chambers's explanations of his perjury, if improbable, are at least plausible. His claim that he denied having known Hiss originally so as not to implicate Hiss is in the hallowed tradition of British schoolboys who do not implicate their mates when caught, and no one calls them psychopathic neurotics. But I have yet to see any other explanation than guilt or lapse of memory for the substantial number of retractions by Hiss and his wife between and during each trial. Repeated sudden corrections of memory when statements were disproved strain my credibility. I refer particularly to the many intimate details of the Hisses' life given by Chambers and his wife to prove they knew the Hisses when the documents were stolen; details of the car disposal; of the Hisses' houses; of Mrs. Hiss's typing course and nursing course application. The Hisses denied these facts until the F.B.I. proved them true. Memory lapses?

Jowitt's arguments based on Chambers's suicide attempt are one reason his book was withdrawn in U.S.A. "Chambers gives a detailed account (in *Witness*) of how, after he discovered the documents which were ultimately to satisfy the courts that Hiss and not he was lying, he decided to let those documents prove his innocence and the guilt of the Communist Party, and he took steps to take refuge in death from the persecution to which he was being subjected. . . Lord Jowitt alleges that Chambers attempted to commit suicide before he produced the documents, and draws sinister conclusions from this. . . He goes very far in suggesting that the jury might have brought in a different verdict had they known what, in fact, never happened."—Rebecca West.

I, too, doubt whether the typist's identity could be proved from documents themselves. More important, how did they come to be typed on the Hiss typewriter? I suggest, the jury was more influenced by lack of any possible explanation of Chambers having them other than through Hiss's complicity. How could Chambers obtain 65 top-secret documents from Hiss's department plus memos in Hiss's handwriting (which Hiss's superiors claim should never have been committed to memos) and type copies on Hiss's machine, still in Hiss's possession, without Hiss ever even meeting him? For what possible purpose this fantastic manoeuvring 13

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years before a trial which it is doubtful Chambers could ever have foreseen?

I doubt the jury's bewilderment. The one thing they had to decide was which man was lying about facts. A majority of the first jury and all of the second, after hearing all the evidence and observing both men, decided Hiss was guilty. Then, too, they probably knew more of Communist philosophy than Jowitt, who has never heard of a philosophy which excuses the abuse of the confidence of a man's country by making available secret documents to outsiders. D.E.H. (Dunedin).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

"THE CRUEL SEA"

Sir.—The Sunday evening talk on August 23 was about Children's Book Week, and I was simply amazed to hear the speaker, Mrs. P. M. Hattaway, suggest *The Cruel Sea* as a suitable book for youngsters to read. To put it mildly I was shocked to think that this book, containing what it does, should be so recommended. Had the story been written as a straightforward narrative, without its attendant sordidness, it would be really first-class; but as it stands—well, I just didn't read more than about a third before I became sick with disgust at the language alone. Old-fashioned ideas, you say? I am old-fashioned if speaking as I am is being old-fashioned. Children hear just as bad swearing, anyway, and the seamy side of life is no secret to children, you say? Maybe today's children do hear all about the badness such a book contains, anyway—but why read about it when there are so many other much nicer books in our libraries? I know that a "banned" book is a "made" book very often, and to put such books as *The Cruel Sea* out of children's reach would only make them curious—but to have it actually recommended is what appalled me.

J.M.S. (Wellington).

(A revised and shortened edition of *The Cruel Sea* has been published for younger readers.—Ed.)

"EDUCATING ARCHIE"

Sir.—I am entirely in accord with the opinion expressed by "Relax"; in fact, I would extend the list of "poor entertainment" by the inclusion of the *Adventures of Matisse*. It is, to me, a mystery how such rubbish is accounted worthy of recording. Also, is it necessary to waste so much space on records with so-called "musical" interludes? A brief silence would probably be far more appropriate in most instances and infinitely preferable to the raucous hurly-burly of sound inflicted on the eardrums as a prelude to a change of scene. H. B. ALLEWAY (Timaru).

PASTEURISATION

Sir.—Concerning pasteurised milk, "M.M." suggested that the reason why milk should be boiled for infants is because it is more digestible that way. Being a nurse she should know that if milk or any other protein food is heated to a high degree the albumin becomes coagulated and the vitamins (the life elements) are damaged or lost. I have brought up my baby, now aged one year, on raw milk, and he is the picture of health, with firm flesh and not unhealthily fat as so many babies are.

Experiments at some Barnardo homes in England have proved that raw milk and not pasteurised is far more beneficial. It has been stated over the radio that there is no difference between the taste of raw and pasteurised milk if pas-

teurised milk is properly treated. How are we to know that it is treated properly? Could some authorised person please inform me whether pasteurised milk is boiled? R.W. (Blenheim).

(There are two methods of pasteurising milk. It may be heated to 145° Fahr., and kept at that temperature for half an hour, or it may be heated to 162° Fahr., and kept at that for 15 seconds. Immediately after heating it is cooled to 40° Fahr. or lower and poured into sterile bottles.—Ed.)

COLOUR AND PATTERN

Sir.—Mr. William Cranston asks me for one evolution concept which is obviously grounded on facts. One such is the concept of the survival of the fittest; another is colour and pattern adaptation in living organisms. These concepts were attacked in *The Listener*, quite unsuccessfully in my opinion, by L. R. Richardson, Professor of Zoology at Victoria University College. One of the facts upon which both these concepts are based is that almost every plant and animal species existing at the present time is in a state of divergence, more or less, and each established ecotype or variety is patterned (or adapted) to fit its peculiar ecological niche. This is only explainable when we recognise the known plasticity and mutability of gene and chromosome structures. It is because of this plasticity that living organisms have survived all the geological and climatic vicissitudes through the ages. Had they been created as unchanging entities I doubt if even one species, plant or animal, would exist today, for on this changeable earth nature's challenge to living things must always be: Adapt, mutate, or perish.

W. B. BROCKIE (Wellington).

SIR HUGH ROBERTON

Sir.—At the beginning of August, 1YA broadcast two delightful recitals of songs by Sir Hugh Robertson, sung from the studio by Edith Black. The twelve songs were presented so artistically and in so authentic a manner that I was not surprised to learn later that Miss Black had sung with the Glasgow Orpheus Choir, and so had presumably received her ideas on interpretation from the composer himself.

Hearing this recital of Sir Hugh Robertson's works (all new to me) made me hope that we might soon hear from the BBC an assessment of the life and work of this remarkable man. However, this has now been admirably done from Auckland (1YC, August 31) by Mr. John Longmire.

Mr. Longmire is not particularly happy at the microphone in the matter of projecting his personality to his listeners, but in this instance his material could not have been bettered. He gave us an excellent idea of the great personal charm which could weld a mass of voices into a single unit; the quick perception of a fault of intonation in any individual member of a choir; and we even had a hint of what I had always suspected: the ruthless weeding out without which the wonderful achievement of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir would not have been possible.

DONALD RAE (Auckland).

CLASSICAL CORNERS

Sir.—When first 2YA omitted both its Classical Corners I put it down to accident. Faced by their loss for over a week I have been forced to the conclusion that the Broadcasting Service has changed its policy by ceasing to

cater for all tastes and by keeping to the wishes of the "average" listener. The policy also seems to be one of conciliation. On most mornings we have been offered a sop in the form of a single aria, or something of a light classical nature. This does no more than whet the appetite and rouse the listener to fury by its very inadequacy. After all, a quarter of an hour is not much to ask for, and those who really cannot bear classical music have an alternative in 2ZB. Unfortunately, lovers of good music have no such alternative. These two quarter-hours have given me a great deal of very real pleasure, and I feel sure I am not the only listener who would plead strongly for their restoration.

CROTCHETY CLASSIC (Wellington).

(Classical numbers, formerly placed at a specific time, are now being spread through the programme.—Ed.)

GLADYS COOPER

Sir.—The article in a recent issue of *The Listener* by J. W. Goodwin on that wonderful actress Gladys Cooper has a special interest for me, as I saw her in London at the time of the First World War. Miss Cooper took the leading part in *The Naughty Wife*, and the play had a great run, but I have forgotten the theatre at which it was produced. The night I saw the play Gladys Cooper appeared in her part with her arm in a sling as the result of an accident. It was announced at the beginning of the show that Miss Cooper had had a slight accident, and asked for the indulgence of the audience. Naturally she received a great ovation and achieved something that has seldom been equalled.

N. C. WINSTANLEY (Raumati Beach).

MUSIC FOR THE VERY YOUNG

Sir.—I write in support of Dorothy Davies in her approach to this subject. The formal concerts will be a thousand times more beneficial if the very young have been inoculated in the home, as the first hurdles will have been taken in circumstances and surroundings which do not brand them as "an occasion." Surely the earliest contact with music should be through singing to and by the very young. This will enable them immediately to link up meaning with sound and so learn to follow descriptive orchestral work.

BASSO PROFUNDO (Napier).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

H. A. Fraser (Invercargill).—Thanks for suggestion. It was done before, but was found unsatisfactory.

N.H. (Christchurch).—Another series is tentatively scheduled to begin from the National Stations on October 24.

P.G. (Aramoho).—(1) "Danger Man," by George Melschirco. (2) Inquiry should be made at station from which broadcast was heard. (3) "Resistance," by Charles Williams.

Not 60 Yet (Lower Hutt).—The older recordings are spread through the programmes of all stations. Although clashes are avoided wherever possible, the cross-checking of every item would be almost impossible. There is a place for your particular favourites in the request sessions.

M. Hutchinson (Little River).—Thank you for your interest. Already, talks are spread through the evening much more than formerly; and the spread is being broadened. In the week you mention, there were talks at 7.0 p.m., 7.30, 7.45, 8.0, 8.15, 8.30, 8.45, 9.15, and 9.30—besides 7.15 and 10.0 p.m. Also discussions at 8.0 and 8.30.

Castlecliff Listener.—The Atwell and Formby programmes were both scheduled, but because of varying circumstances, were not played. Announcements on the changes of programme should have been made: it is regretted that they were not. An investigation does not support the other charge. It is possible that you tuned to a station other than 2ZB, playing a different episode.